

PCREVIEW

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO PC LEISURE

SEPTEMBER 1995 • £4.95 • CD Edition

Turn on Toon in....

...the definitive guide to
new animation – and how
to do it for yourself

EVERY
major
new product
reviewed

**You're in the
army now**

How PCs are shaping
the nation's defences

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• **Air Power** • **Cyber Judas**

See p18 for your CD guide!



20,95 HFI

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WORK



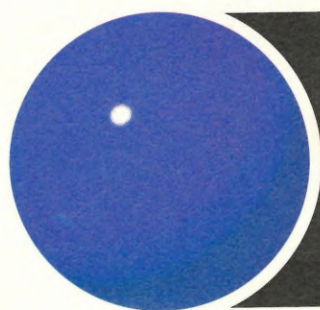
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CONTENT

September 1995 Issue 47

It's a fair bet that one of the primary reasons why the PC is riding so high as a home leisure machine is its ability to manipulate increasingly sophisticated animations and throw them around the screen like billy-ho. High time then for a closer look at the world of animated antics — which is precisely what we've done this issue. Watch out too for our round-up of Pentiums, an extended technical section and a larger-than-ever screen scene, featuring games which fair crack along in terms of their quality.

See you next month

Steve

Cover Story

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Toon in...

From Felix the Cat to a PC in a living room in Felixstowe, we explore state-of-the-art animation on the wide screen and the monitor — plus there's tips and buyers advice for all you budding Walt Disneys or Don Bluths.



Cover picture © and ™ 1995 Felix the Cat Productions

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Trip the light fantastic

Yes we know the PC is an all-singing, all-dancing home computer but now it really is, er, all-singing and all-dancing. Adam Peters spends a day at the Phoenix Festival and finds PC-controlled raves.



Rave-on with the PC.

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The best coverdisk yet



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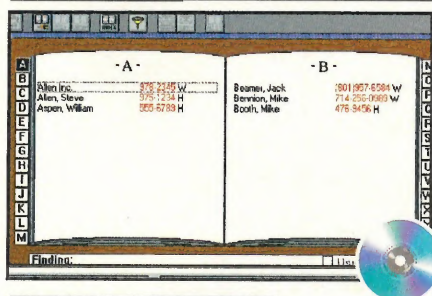
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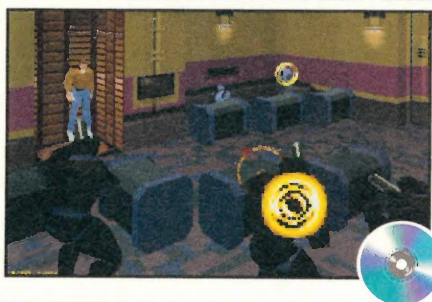
The disks
With more great
programs than
you could wish
for, including an excel-
lent value-for-money
utility and the first
time you'll get to play
Air Power. Plus the
brilliant **Fade to Black**,
a playable demo of
Apache. Oh, we
could go on...



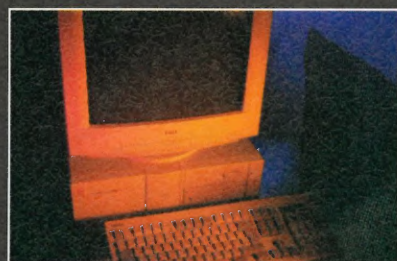
Ascend



Fade to Black



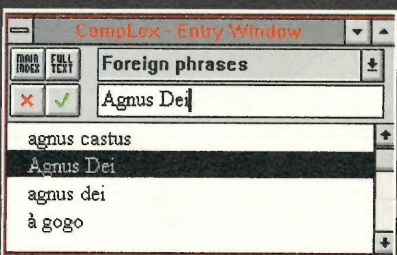
Air Power



The latest and some say greatest
affordable Pentiums on test — four of
the best reviewed on page 100.



The loves, the life... of one of the
greatest female icons of this century —
multimedia Marilyn on page 128.



No-one who's serious about word
processing can afford to be without a
good dictionary — and we put the latest
on trial on page 113.



'Mr President, we have to advise you
you're in considerable danger' — feel
the power of the awesome CyberJudas,
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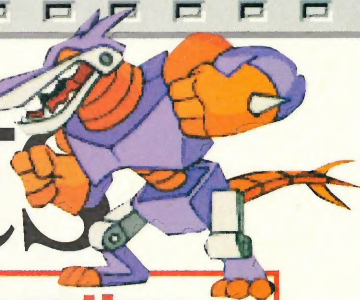
*This is what's here, folks...
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The PC in TV land – page 14*

*by Pat Fox and
Rik Henderson*

*Forever the
glistening prize of
any media, animation
demonstrates our ability
to invent whole new worlds
and make them real. And as an
art form, it's more do-able for
the home user than ever before.*

Turn on,

The convert



When I last went to America — January of this year, to be precise — I spent most of my time watching TV, in amongst losing my plane tickets and getting shot in the head (or am I confusing that with being stabbed in Tunisia?). And, being more specific, I watched cartoons. Anything of an animated type I'd stare at continuously for hours, almost to the extent of becoming vegetablisised. And if you're after totally immersive TV at the utterly lowest



Animation on the PC...

Here is a run-down of how animation affects your home computer.

● GAMES

Be it your Mortal Kombat digitised affair, or the gloriously drawn LucasArts action adventures (like Day of the Tentacle or Full Throttle), every graphical game features sprites in different poses flicking through sequences. To find out more about games animation techniques read page 12 of this feature.

● MPEG MOVIES

Animated movies are flooding to the PC in the Video CD format, and although they were not created on a PC, at least your PC (with the inclusion of an MPEG card) can savour the delights of Thumbelina or All Dogs Go To Heaven. All that remains now is to bring the Disney films to Video CD.

● ART PACKAGES

Most art packages have an animation utility inbuilt. Some are geared around 3D rendering, others are more straight-forward 2D drawing software. Both allow you to move graphics to your specifications, hence animation.

Animation is being driven by the consumers of software. In the past, animators have had very few opportunities to parade their talents, but now the games market is snapping them up like there's no tomorrow. Rik Henderson gets the key to the cel block...



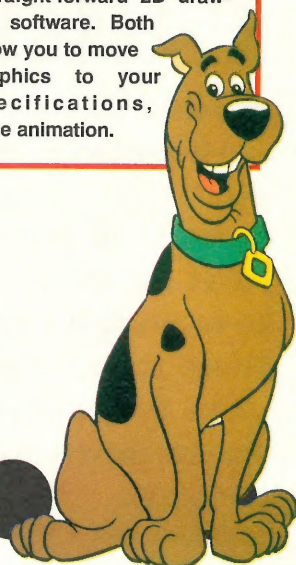
base level, American cartoon exploits are the kernel inside the walnut shell. Not only do they have the honour of being well produced (well, after the LSD influenced shorts of the 1970s anyway), but on stateside TV they're always bang up to date.

The best thing about the current batch of animated series is that they are becoming increasingly geared towards a more mature audience. The Simpsons is wholly responsible for this. It proved that, as in the forties, adults are as interested in the cartoon medium as much as their children — and The Lion King and Aladdin were rated very highly by all ages. Then there's the solely 'adult' cartoons, Beavis and Butthead

and Duckman, that offer lesser production values and concentrate on the more mature humour end of the comedy spectrum. And it is from here that the PC opportunities for animators have sprung up.

Now that there's a wider cartoon-watching audience, normal animators can have the words 'games' and 'multimedia' added to their business cards. The latest games that are swarming across to our shores have graphics akin to an explosion in an animation factory, a long way removed from the stumbling mess of lego blocks we all endured on EGA. Extraordinarily respected animators

Continued on next page



toon in.



Readysoft's *Braindead 13* (soon to be released by Empire) features very nice quality animation, and with a promise of better gameplay than previous efforts.



▲ *Peter Pan* is an European cartoon based on the J.M. Barrie creation. Sky is showing the series but you will see it on CDi in the future.

are overseeing games projects and using age-old techniques to really jazz them up.

One such man who has already made steps in this direction is Dan Kuenstar who is heading up the animation team working on 7th Level's *Battle Beasts* — a team consisting of some of the Ren and Stimpy animators no less. His previous credits include Spielberg's *Land before Time* and Don Bluth's *All Dogs Go To Heaven*. It is no surprise either that Don Bluth himself has got a comprehensive games credit to go along with his plethora of animated movies.

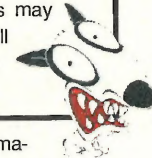
Seeing as he's the creator of *Dragon's Lair*, *Space Ace* and no doubt has more 'interactive cartoons' planned, Bluth's



Just what is this animation stuff?

In case you hadn't realise, the 'motion' that you see on the screen of a TV, or at the cinema, is actually just the illusion of movement created by showing a series of still frames so quickly that the brain is fooled into seeing motion.

In traditional animation, an artist sketches first on a series of sheets of 'onion skin' paper, a sort of tracing paper that allows previous frames to show through, helping the artist to ensure that the frames flow realistically (sometimes, the head animator draws only some of the frames, and the intervening frames are filled in by other people, a process called *Tweening*). Next, the sketched frames are transferred (by a process similar to photocopying) to a 'cel', a transparent piece of film, where they are drawn over with ink and colour is added. These cels may then be overlaid onto a still background and copied to film, ready for showing.



games have got all the top animation you could ever want; unfortunately it's taken some time to actually come up with techniques to cross such on-screen graphical brilliance with a shred of gameplay. Could you imagine a *Doom* style game with the cartoonery of the man who brought us the excellently animated *Thumbelina* movie? Now you're cooking with calor gas! And that's not a pipe dream, the PCs graphical spec is constantly bettering itself with every upgrade, and

Hands on...

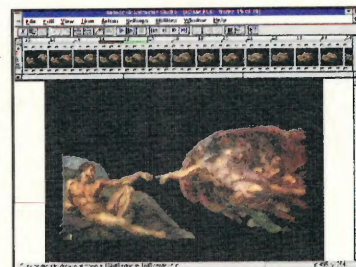
If you want to get into animation then get the right software. Pat Fox takes a look at just a few of the packages that can help you express your animated urges.



AUTODESK ANIMATOR STUDIO

Animation package

Autodesk comes up trumps again with this hugely powerful (and hugely resource-hungry) animation and graphics manipulation utility. It is possible to knock up some damned impressive animation with reasonable ease; the video compositing tools are very flexible, and the addition of a comprehensive set of drawing tools, and the ability to use onion-skinning techniques, means that this is a very capable and useable application. The downside is that it demands a very high spec machine indeed to be worth while, but then this is a professional utility, not a toy. See page 115 for a full review.



▲ Apparently God uses Animator

Minimum PC: 486DX2

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Windows compatible

Price: £58163

Publisher: Autodesk

Contact: (01483) 303322



with the current accepted standard (SVGA), if an animator paints, draws, or creates a masterpiece it is now a reality that it will transpose itself onto a computer monitor with very little loss of its original quality.

This essentially means that the barrier between the media that existed in the past has been not so much broken, but more charged by a love-struck Rhino. It has also had an opposite effect — where the game-related shenanigans of popular characters are being transferred over to the cellular antics of cartoons. Sonic The Hedgehog (coming out on the PC around December) became extraordinarily popular in the States due to his cartoon adventures, so much so that when a survey was performed amongst American kids, he rated as second most recognisable figure just behind Mickey Mouse and ahead of Michael Jackson and Ronald McDonald. And now Earthworm Jim (again coming to the PC in Windows '95 format later this year) has been scheduled for cartoon conversion in America, and if it's a hit we'll see it come to these shores around late '96. Indeed the animation director of the game also worked for Disney's movie branch, and is over-seeing the cartoon project another example of the animation industry working in coalition with the computer market.

These are only brief examples of how the PC and animators work together, I haven't even delved into the benefits the machine has brought to the work procedures of top animation studios — I guess, then, you'll just have to read our top studio interview section on page 13.

Continued on next page

▲ **Current top of the cartoon crop is Spiderman (having replaced Batman Adventures, The X-Men and Biker Mice From Mars as no. 1 'toon in the U.S.). It's based on the comic-book hero and features all the classic Saturday-morning ingredients — villains with silly names, and superb fight sequences.**



▲ **Battle Beast's animators all come from a TV background. Most of them worked for the cultish Ren and Stimpy.**



▲ **Sky has the best range of animated antics, including Orson and Olivia (above), currently on British TV.**



Hall of fame

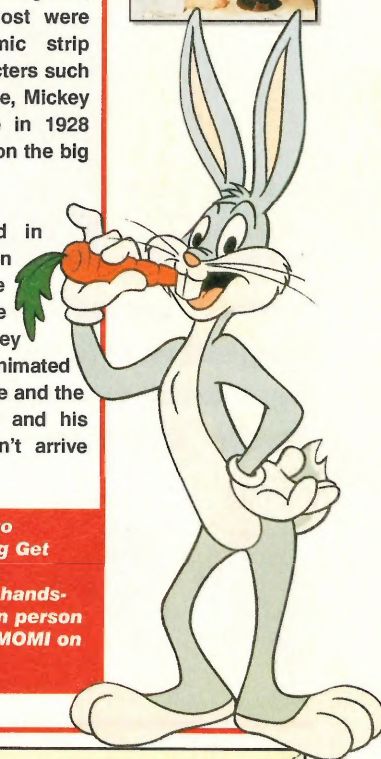
We took a trip to the Museum of the Moving Image (MOMI) on London's South Bank to get back to the roots of animation.

● The very earliest forms of animation predate even the invention of cinematography: mechanical animation devices like Horner's Zoetrope, which worked by affixing a series of images to the inside of a hand-cranked rotating drum, were around in the middle of the last century.

● The patenting of the 'cel' process in 1914 paved the way for the industrialisation of animation, and soon the first animated stars were appearing, such as Disney's first cartoon or 'laugh-o-gram', which appeared in 1921. Most were originally drawn from comic strip sources, but eventually characters such as Felix the Cat and, of course, Mickey Mouse in Steam Boat Willie in 1928 made a name for themselves on the big screen.

● Cartoons only increased in popularity with the introduction of synchronised sound in the late twenties, and colour in the thirties. By 1937, Walt Disney released the first full-length animated feature: the classic Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Chuck Jones and his friends Bugs Bunny etc didn't arrive until 1938

For those hankering to get into animation, MOMI is organising Get Animated!, an opportunity for members of the public to get hands-on experience of animation, in person or over the Internet. Contact MOMI on (0171) 928 3232



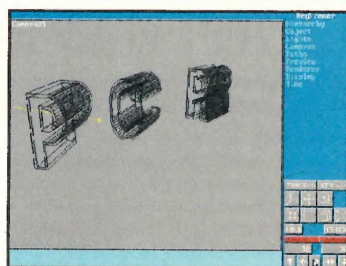
3D STUDIO

3D modelling package

Last year, no game was complete without a slick, 3D intro sequence rendered in Autodesk's 3D Studio. This professional-quality package allows you to create computer 'models' of objects and then animate them in three dimensions — it was used to particularly good effect on Time Warner's Rise of the Robots (although the game was a bit of a letdown).

It's gone out of fashion a bit now, but it's still the most powerful package in its field available for the PC; in fact we used it to create the animated sequence you see when you run the PC Review cover CD.

Given that it costs over two and a half thousand pounds, 3DStudio is out of the reach of most users, but if you have the cash, you want this.



▲ Now that's what I call 3D

Minimum PC: 486DX

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: N/A

Price: £2526.25

Publisher: Autodesk

Contact: (01483) 303322

CRAYOLA ART STUDIO

Kids' drawing package

Crayola Art Studio is one of a new pair of packages targeted at kids (the other being Crayola Amazing Art Adventure). Art Studio is a combination of multimedia entertainment and a tool for knocking up pictures and basic animations. It eschews dull menus in favour of multimedia-style hot links, and so is very friendly for kids to use. The animation features are very basic, relying for the most part on integrating short animations that are supplied with your own backgrounds.

It's not going to be much help if you want to create the next Lion King, but there is certainly enough here to keep a child amused for some time.



▲ Rik's bedroom, yesterday

Minimum PC: 486DX

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Windows compatible

Price: £29.99

Publisher: Micrografx

Contact: (01483) 747526

Acme patented techniques



INVASION OF THE TOONS

Hand-drawn animation has been around since the earliest days of computer gaming — anybody remember the rather clever (for the time) ASCII-art of 3D Monster Maze on the ZX81? Or the rather dodgy sprite-based games like Jet Set Willy or Manic Miner on the C64? They all count as animation. But with the faster, higher-



Battle Beasts from Seventh Level - play it yourself on this month's CD ▶

resolution graphics available on modern PCs, true cartoon-style graphics are now a reality. Coming soon on the PC is Virgin's ToonStruck, an animated adventure which combines hand-drawn animation with live action — Christopher Lloyd of Back to the Future fame takes the role of an animator trapped in his own cartoon world. It features some of the most impressive use of cartoon graphics we've ever seen — let's just hope the game plays as good as it looks.

Also, look out for 7th Level's Battle Beasts (demoed on this month's cover CD), an animated beat 'em-up designed by some of the animators that worked on the Ren and Stimpy Show. Also worth a look are LucasArts' Day of the Tentacle, and Empire's Braindead 13 (a descendant of Space Ace, pioneer in the cartoon-style game field).

WORLD IN MOTION

Cover an actor in little luminous blobs, film it from half a dozen angles, put it all through a computer and the result is realistic human movement (for more detail on this process, have a look at our Death of a Graphic Artist feature,



Their craft may seem as fiddly as glueing together the ends of spaghetti bolognese - but old hands at animation keep tricks up their sleeves to decidedly tasty effect.

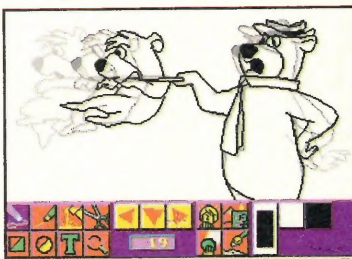


HANNA-BARBERA ANIMATION WORKSHOP

Hand-drawn animation

Hanna-Barbera, for those who have been living underground for the last 30 years, are the people behind such classics as the Flintstones, Scooby Doo and the Jetsons. Not surprisingly, this package is aimed mainly at kids, with a bright, simple interface based around big, clear icons.

It's very simple to use, and provides standard onion-skinning, painting and background drawing tools. However it is fairly limited, offering only 320x200 resolution, and your animations can only be viewed from within the program, since the export format is unique to the package, a fact which greatly reduces its usefulness. But if you're just after something to keep a child busy for a while, this is fine.



▲ Yogi is chastised by the Ranger for using Boo-boo as a yo-yo

Minimum PC: XT/AT

Minimum memory: 1Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: N/A

Price: £49.99

Publisher: Empire

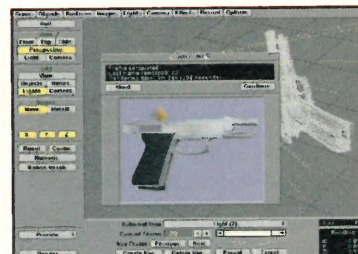
Contact: (0181) 3437337

LIGHTWAVE

3D modelling package

NewTek's LightWave, reviewed in Issue 45, is the 3D modelling package that is used to generate the special effects in TV programmes like Babylon 5, Star Trek: The Next Generation and SeaQuest DSV (shame about the acting).

Like Autodesk's 3DStudio (see previous page), LightWave gives you the facilities to create three-dimensional models on the computer, then send the computer away to produce high-quality rendered animations. Lightwave's output quality is impeccable, but it's not quite as easy to use or as flexible as 3DStudio. But then again, it is nearly two thousand pounds cheaper, so for serious users who are strapped for cash, it's well worth a look.



▲ Apparently Quentin Tarrantino makes extensive use of LightWave

Minimum PC: 486DX

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: N/A

Price: £816.62

Publisher: NewTek

Contact: (01252) 7183000

Issue 45, page 48). Where there is a large number of complex characters to animate, it is easier and cheaper to automatically create graphics based on this information, than to animate each frame of each figure by hand.

Soon to come from Gremlin is Actua Soccer, a football game (you don't say!) featuring the computerised ball-handling skills of Sheffield Wednesday stars Andy Sinton and Chris Woods, due out in September. Infogrames' Prisoner of Ice (reviewed Issue 45), a graphic adventure where you take on the Nazis and thawed-out aliens, features sprites based on motion capture information. Other memorable examples of games based on motion capture technology include Argonaut's FX Fighter (reviewed last issue), and Delphine's Fade to Black (previewed this issue, page 56), the sequel to Flashback, where our intrepid hero Conrad Hart returns to take on morphin' meanies in an Alone in the Dark-style environment.

DIGITISED DELIGHTS

Theoretically at least the simplest method of achieving realistic motion in a game is simply to film a real person performing the required movements against a 'blue screen' background, and then to convert those pictures directly into computer graphics; the blue background can then be electronically 'removed', and replaced with a computer-generated backdrop.

The most obvious example of the use of this technique is Virgin's Mortal Kombat, where real martial arts experts were filmed performing each ultra-violent move — although the

blood was added afterwards, apparently. Soon to come from Acclaim is probably the biggest-name release of the year, Batman Forever, which will be a beat 'em up featuring the Caped Crusader and chums digitised from real-life actors (probably not Val Kilmer).

Delphine's good-looking platform game Flashback was among the first games to feature this process heavily; and Noctropolis, from Electronic Arts, scored a lot of brownie points for its use of digitisation set in a stylish graphic-novelsque world.

THE THIRD DIMENSION

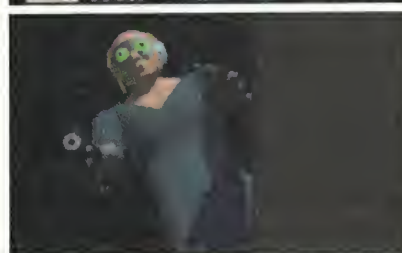
3D rendering came of age only recently, with the increased power and lower price of products like Autodesk's 3DStudio (see p115). Once you have built an accurate three-dimensional model of those objects that will appear in a particular scene, it is a relatively simple process to get the computer to go away and produce a two-dimensional picture or animation, based on that information. For a while it was de rigueur for games to have a slick 3D rendered intro, but it seems to have gone out of fashion a little these days.

In gaming terms, the best use of 3D modelling has to be Mirage's Rise of the Robots; unfortunately, although the graphics were breathtaking the game itself was a huge disappointment. Rise 2 is due out this autumn, and promises to be a lot less crap. CyberJudas, the politics/global warfare sim from Empire (exclusively reviewed this issue, p64) also makes extensive use of this process to create a very involving atmosphere.

Continued on next page



◀ **Could this be the CyberJudas?**
Well, he does have a stupid pair of goggles and a big gun...



◀ **Rise of the Robots 2 - looks good enough to eat. But then, so did the first one...**



Leaping lizards Batman! Somebody stole all the furniture! ▼



MICROSOFT MOVIE MAKER

3D animation package

One of Microsoft's first titles to take advantage of their new operating system Windows '95, 3D Movie Maker is based on a rather unusual idea.

You are supplied with a variety of pre-rendered three-dimensional backgrounds, and some pre-rendered 3D characters to go in them, and you put them together to create animated scenes then add dialogue and music to jazz things up a bit.

Quite what it will be used for is still under wraps. It's still in the early developmental stage, so the picture shown here doesn't necessarily reflect the look of the final product, which should be out sometime around September-ish.



▲ **Movie Maker probably won't look anything like this**

Minimum PC: 486 DX33

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible

Price: £TBA

Publisher: Microsoft

Contact: (01734) 270001

Animation's what you need

And here's one games animator who's also worked the other side of the onion skins...

Name: Steve Cavalier

Job: Lead animator at Virgin Interactive

PCR: What are the differences between working with traditional animation, and working on games animation?

Steve: The interactivity is the major difference. It limits the length of movement that a character can have because each character has to have the option of being interrupted at any point. This is not very helpful towards the quality of animation.

PCR: What is the next big thing in games animation?

Steve: I think the next big thing will be 3D. The way I see my job going now is by applying my 2D techniques to fully-rendered 3D characters, that makes what I've been doing for the last umpteen years become really exciting and interesting again. I'm really enjoying myself.

PCR: What is your favourite game, in terms of animation?

Steve: Ecstatica. Each character has its own set of complete animations. Animation is about characterisation, and Ecstatica has that in abundance — the animator has created a completely believable world.



State-of-the-Art...

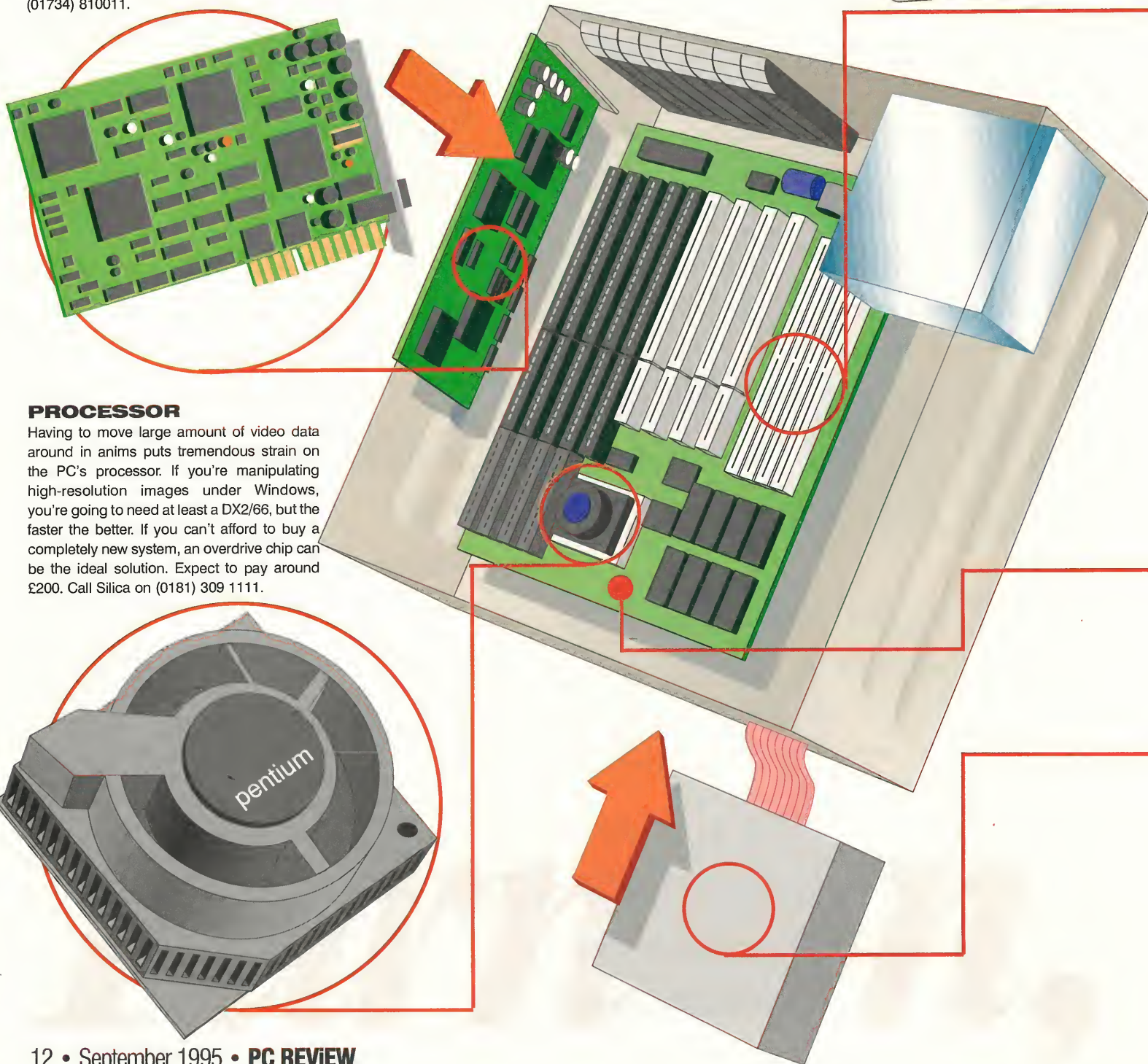
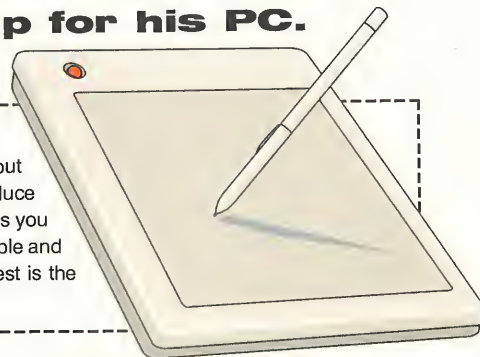
Accessories, sir? The more professional animator may need to purchase a more top-drawer set-up for his PC. So here's your guide to what you'll need...

FAST GRAPHICS CARD

Obviously, a lot of the donkey work in graphics file manipulation is undertaken by the graphics card. Faster on-board processors and more, dedicated video memory (VRAM) help speed up image processing. There are stacks of speedy cards about, but we particularly like the Cirrus Logic Alpine PCI card which costs £105. Call Cirrus Logic on (01734) 810011.

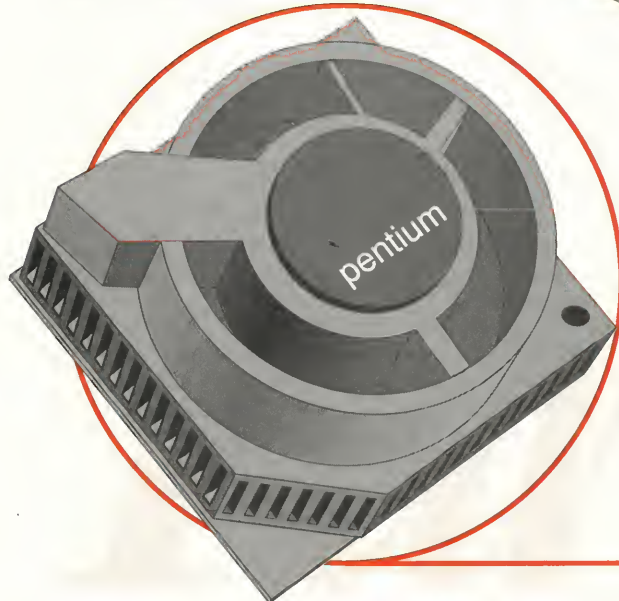
GRAPHICS TABLET

With a bit of practice, a mouse can be quite good for drawing with, but if you're looking for a more natural implement with which to produce your masterpiece, then a graphics tablet is what you're after. It allows you to use a sort of electronic pen as a pointer, making it more comfortable and intuitive for most people. Prices start from £40. One of the cheapest is the Tabby, from Micrograf, on (01923) 248222



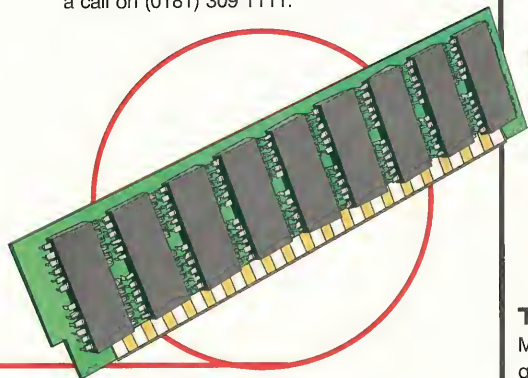
PROCESSOR

Having to move large amount of video data around in anims puts tremendous strain on the PC's processor. If you're manipulating high-resolution images under Windows, you're going to need at least a DX2/66, but the faster the better. If you can't afford to buy a completely new system, an overdrive chip can be the ideal solution. Expect to pay around £200. Call Silica on (0181) 309 1111.

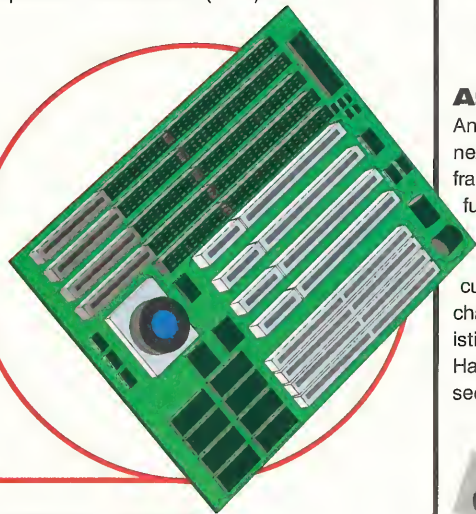


MEMORY

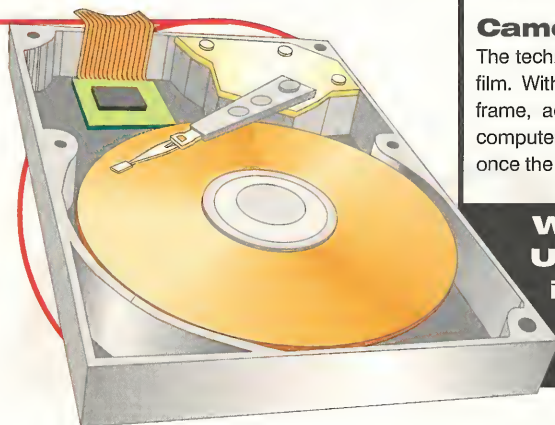
You can never have enough of a good thing, and this is particularly true for system RAM. As a minimum we recommend 8Mb, although for long, high resolution animations you'll really need at least twice that. RAM prices are quite high at around £35 per megabyte. Give Silica a call on (0181) 309 1111.

**MOTHERBOARD**

The motherboard controls communication between the various components of your PC. Older machines are based on slower ISA technology, but newer motherboard standards such as VESA Local Bus and PCI allow faster data transfer rates. VESA is particularly good at graphics work, while PCI is better all round, but more expensive. Basic upgrades cost £100 upwards. Call Silica on (0181) 309 1111

**HARD DRIVE**

Graphics files are notoriously hungry for hard drive space, so a large drive is a must when creating lengthy animations. IDE drive prices have plummeted recently, so you can now pick up a 500Mb hard drive for well under £200. Try Maxtor on (00353) 1204 1111.

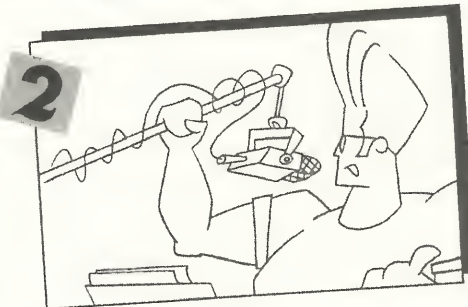


7 Easy steps to tip top toons

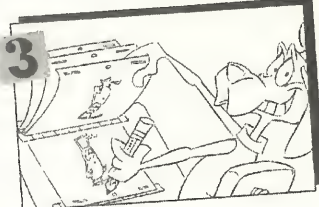
Hanna-Barbera's best animators tell you how to produce cracking animations.

**The Storyboard**

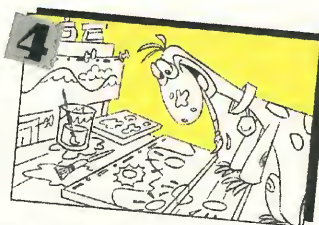
Most of the really great cartoons begin life as a bunch of great ideas. When there are enough ideas to make a story, the storyboard — a sort of 'comic strip' version of the cartoon with dialogue and directions noted beneath each drawing — is created. This allows you to work the ideas into a logical (or illogical) sequence.

**Recording**

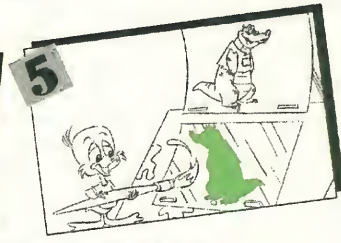
The next step, strangely enough, is to record the sound for the cartoon — particularly the voices, since it's actually easier to tie the animation to the sound rather than the other way round. It's also important to make sure that the voices suit the characters that they will finally represent.

**Animation**

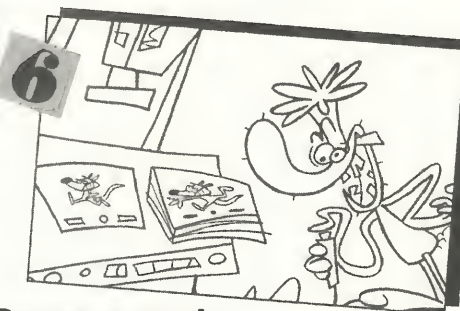
Animating the characters comes next; it's easiest to sketch each frame first, and to help in this it's useful to use a package that is capable of 'onion skinning' — showing previous frames as well as the current one — to ensure that your characters move smoothly and realistically (one such package is Hanna-Barbera Animation Studio — see panel, page 10).

**Background painting**

Rather than draw the same background over and over again in each frame, it is generally easier to draw a single colour background and then place the characters on top of it when they are drawn. If you look closely, you'll see that the backgrounds on most older cartoons are actually far more detailed than the characters that move around on top.

**Cel painting**

Once the sketches for each frame are finished to your satisfaction, it is then time to add colour to your characters. Traditional cartoons used to use solid, block colours for anything that moved — thus saving time and effort. However, recently, advances in animation techniques mean that modern cartoons can feature complex shading and highlights for added realism.

**Camera work**

The technical term for actually shooting the cartoon on film. With traditional animation this is done frame by frame, advancing the film manually. Animating on a computer takes all the hard work out of the process — once the frames are drawn, they are ready to view.

**Editing**

This means synchronising the sound, adding any extra sound effects and music that is necessary, and generally making sure that the whole thing hangs together. When it's done, you can sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labour...

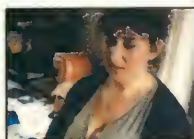
We are indebted to the Cartoon Network (the UK's only all-cartoon TV channel) for their help in compiling these tips, in association with Hanna-Barbera, and also supplying many of the cartoon pictures in this feature.

Toon's'R'Us



SoftFuture Productions, comprising Jason White and Richard Wright, work entirely on the PC using packages such as Autodesk's 3DStudio and Animator Pro, and also their own custom software, to produce some stunning experimental animation. An intensive combination of archive footage and computer generated images, their work, such as the recently-screened *Heliocentrum*, explores serious issues and complex ideas.

"By storing pictures as data, it becomes easier to manipulate them and experiment with the combination of images from various sources. Also, the electronic medium means that there is a wider variety of means distribution, whether it be via the Internet, or through multimedia publications," they say. However they stress that access to powerful hardware and clever software is no substitute for ideas; 'Knowing how to use a computer is only a small part of the equation. The focus should be the harnessing of creative potential.'



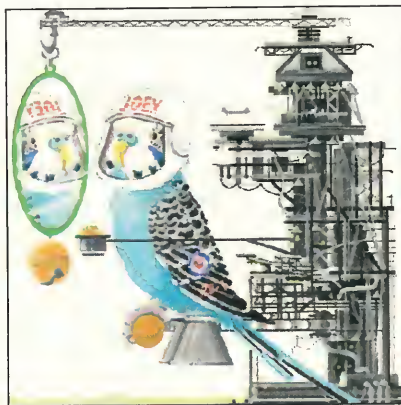
You say it can't be done? Pat Fox talks to some professional animators who only use computers to produce their work.

That's not all!



So you're itching to get in there and do it yourself?

Well, go ahead! Send us the fruits of your labour, and the best animation will win over £100 worth of software! Send your work to: I've been framed! PC Review Priory Court 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.



Andy Walker produces cut-out-style animations (somewhat akin to the work of Monty Python's Terry Gilliam). Originally a screenwriter; he bought a computer for word processing, and soon came to realise its potential for animation.

"Using the computer means that I can easily work at home, and combine animation with my screenwriting work."

Phil Davies, Andy's producer, says, "I was fascinated by the idea of combining traditional animators and new technology, and seeing if the results could be the same, or even better than using traditional methods. Also, it's attractive simply because of the financial advantages — work that would once have taken a team of animators several weeks can now be accomplished by one person in a few hours."

Ruth Lingford works on an Amiga 4000 (although her earlier work was produced using a 1500), using Electronic Arts' Deluxe Paint VI. Her most famous animation is 'What She Wants', which explores women's sexuality in a quite graphic way using a distinctive free-flowing, hand-drawn style.

"I was attracted to the computer as a medium because of the instantaneous feedback," she says. "You can tell instantly if another frame is needed or whatever. If you were working on paper, you would need thousands of pounds worth of equipment to get the same kind of result."



The PC Review Team's Favourite Cartoons of All Time

Cal: Tom & Jerry
Possibly the most famous double act of all time, they committed some of the most appalling acts of violence ever to be shown on screen. Hilarious.

Jim: Daffy Duck
The hyperactive, probably schizophrenic, and much abused star of many a Warner Brother short. He invariably came off worst to whoever was his co-star.

Pat: The Cat Came Back
An obscure but riotously funny Canadian-produced cartoon featuring a persistent cat and his reluctant owner's futile attempts to rid himself of it. Well, I've heard of it.

Rik: Wacky Races
Hannah-Barbera favourite featuring the immortal Dastardly and Muttley, later to star in their own vehicle, *Catch the Pigeon*.

Steve: Kaa (The Jungle Book)
Remember 'Trust in me'? Kaa was the slimy snake with the speech defect who did his best to eat Mowgli whole. Boo, hiss.

TV Times...

Thanks to the PC and the current stock of animation tools, the television industry has found an ideal way to reduce its expenditure. One of the most expensive elements of a TV Show is the main title sequence. That's why TV executives jumped in the air with a great 'Yahoo' when 3Dstudio arrived, it not only made the process cheaper — a flame studio, or any Silicon Graphics-based workstations really suck up the coffers — but professional TV producers can train their own artists to use the software.

Current programmes that use the technique include Des O'Connor's 'Pots Of Gold'. The title sequence of the programme includes spinning gold-coins swooping through the sky at a fair speed of knots while the show's announcer bellows the introduction. And seeing as the intro is so inexpensive it's a shame they didn't spend more on the show really.

Britains Best Value Notebook

- 50MHz 486DX2 Processor
- 4MB RAM Upgradable to 20MB
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
- Local Bus Graphics, 1MB VRAM
- PCMCIA Type II/III Slots
- 82 key Keyboard, 12 function keys with trackball mouse
- Parallel, Serial & Docking Base Ports
- MS DOS 6.2, MS Windows 3.1
- Lotus Organizer
- Compaq TabWorks
- Compaq Welcome, Learning & Control Centre
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- Weighs 2.5Kg (Colour Models 2.7Kg)
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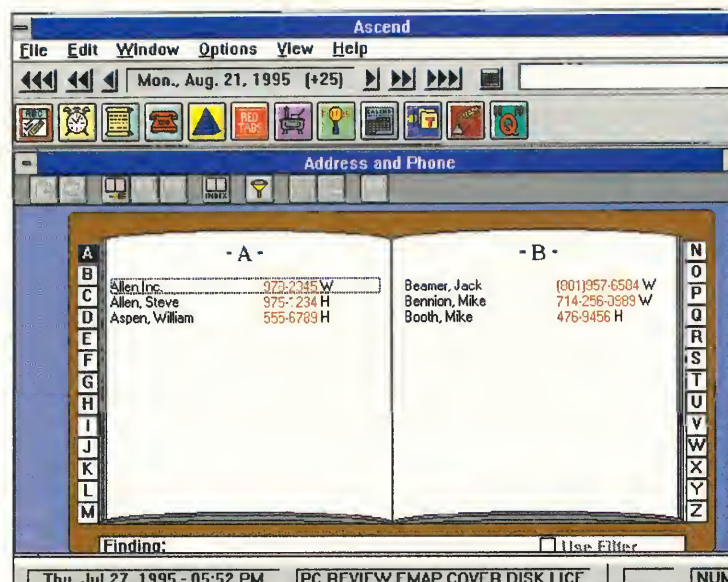




**It's smart,
intelligent,
good looking
and will keep
your diary up
to date. No,
not your new
personal
assistant but
the amazing,
unlimited
version, of
Ascend v4 on
this month's
PC Review
cover CD —
worth a quite
staggering
£175!**

Ascend 4.0

Franklin Quest 01908 692322 • CD



▲ The main Ascend working screen. From here the many time management and personal information modules can be accessed.

ALL THIS AND MORE!

Ascend 4.0 includes these amazing features:

- Diary
- Appointment Scheduler
- Timers and Alarms
- Name and Address Book
- Contact Manager

Along with this little lot it will also help you achieve life long goals and objectives, give you positive encouragement along the way and works in a wonderfully simple manner using Microsoft Windows. Pretty cool huh?

Ascend 4 is a personal information manager or PIM to its mates. (If you've never come across a PIM before, it's the PC equivalent of a personal assistant, helping you manage your time and daily activities.) Ascend 4 has won numerous awards, and is widely recognised as one of the leading programs of its type. But how does it work?

It's easy. Simply install the software following our loading instructions below and then run it. You'll then see something similar to that shown here. This is the main screen of Ascend 4.0. Ascend works on a day to day basis, with the current day shown to the top left of the screen. Either side of this there are arrows for moving backwards and forwards through time, so you can see what you've done in the past or plan ahead in future. And below this is an icon tool bar giving access to the different segments of the program, such as

the priority task manager, the address and telephone book, etc. From each of these modules you can enter and change information specific to the current day.

By clicking on the first icon, the Priority Task manager, you can enter the tasks for today, assign priorities to each and monitor their progress through the day. If you don't complete a task in one day you can automatically carry it forward to the next. You'll find that by using this feature alone you start to achieve more than you did previously.

The various modules and their respective Windows are shown over these pages along with a brief explanation. The program contains extensive on-line help which explains most functions of the program and their operation. Over coming months we'll also be running tutorials showing you how to use this program, and get more from it.

Prioritised Daily Task List



Clicking on this icon will bring up the Daily Task manager. This consists of a series of columns, the first is a status indicator showing, next is a priority identifier, next comes a task description, and a notes field followed by time fields for recording how long it's taking to complete the task. By clicking in the fields you'll be able to enter text or be prompted for a selection of choices. The icons along the top of the window allow you to reorder the priorities etc.

Appointment Scheduler



From here you can plan your appointments, set up alarms and even create re-occurring appointments. Like the Prioritised task list the window is made up of a series of columns which contain details, notes, and timing information.

Daily Record



This is intended for the quick recording of events and information that occur during the day. Clicking on the icon brings up a mini-word processor with facilities for changing font, insert day and times, cutting and pasting text etc.

Address and Phone Book



This is a powerful address book, capable of storing names, addresses and telephone numbers. It also has the ability to categorise people, create notes files for each person, and search for people in a wide variety of ways. Like all Windows in Ascend double clicking on the background of the Window will either hide or reveal a further set of icons along the

CD and Disk Loading Instructions

CD Loading

- 1) The first thing to do is to insert your CD-ROM into the drive and wait for the light on the front of the drive to go out.
- 2) Next, log on to the CD-ROM drive by typing its drive letter and press Enter.
- 3) Now type either: pcr — for the title screen or pcr2 — to skip the title screen
- 4) The screen is laid out in boxes, with each box containing a colour screen-shot of the demo and the title of the game stated underneath. Use the 'Page Up' and 'Page Down' keys to move between the screens. To run a program click on the box you want and press the 'enter' key.

- 5) There is a text menu version of the main menu — just add a 't' e.g pcr t or pcr2 t. In the text version you again use the cursor keys to select the demo you want and press the enter key to run it.

Floppy Disk Loading

- 1) Place your disk into the drive and type A: [Enter] at the MS-DOS prompt. A message bar will appear.
- 2) Now simply follow the on-screen instructions.

On-Line Help

Ascend contains comprehensive on-line help showing how the various modules and parts work. In the October and November issues PC Review will have tutorials showing how to use Ascend 4 and 5 as well.

top of the window. From here you can carry out searches, insert new records and more. To add new names simply press the insert key and fill in the dialog box that appears, this person will then be added to the book.

Goal and Values

The real power of Ascend is seen in the Values and Goals module. This module allows you to enter your Personal Productivity Pyramid, also known as your Personal Constitution, into your computer. Ascend outlines your Governing Values, Long-Range Goals, and Intermediate Goals in a logical pyramid which can then be printed for you. The system works on a Pyramid system, with your beliefs or governing values at the bottom and working up to daily tasks at the top. The four levels of the Pyramid are shown in little icons along the top of the window. Clicking on each icon and pressing Insert allows you to enter and define your steps as needed. These can then be linked with the Daily Priority Task manager to help you achieve the long term aims.

Red Tabs

The Red Tabs module is named after the original Franklin Day Planner's red thumb tabs which set off sections designed to be personalised by each user. Ascend's Red Tabs allow you to quickly enter, store, and

print miscellaneous information. It uses the same word processor as the Daily Record of events.

Note Red Tabs is the one section of Ascend that requires you to save the data yourself, other modules save their own data. To save Red Tab information click on Save under the File menu.

Master Tasks

Ascend allows you to have five different Master Task List categories by which you may temporarily store tasks you would like to do someday, but which you don't want to schedule on a particular day yet. The Master Task List is like a back burner and is a handy feature for storing tasks you don't want to forget, but don't have time to complete in the near future.

Focus

If you use a computer during the day, the Focus module allows you to view and concentrate only on the highest priority task that has not yet been completed from your Prioritised Daily Task List.

Weekly View

Monthly and Weekly Views can be displayed or printed to quickly and graphically show you a summary of the month's or week's appointments.

A calendar is displayed for the currently selected month or week. In the Monthly view, each day in the calendar contains a miniature graph representing the day's schedule of appointments.

Turbo File and Favourite Quotes

The Turbo File module and Favourite Quotes module are very similar. Both allow you to tuck away quotes,

thoughts, and ideas for easy retrieval later. The Turbo File module allows you to specify more information relating to the source and type of information than the Favourite Quotes module.

The Favourite Quotes module allows the storing and retrieval of favourite quotes, thoughts, and ideas. Ascend comes with a few sample quotes.

By clicking on Display Quote of the Day box in the Global Preferences found under the Options menu you can have these quotes displayed when Ascend starts up.

Journal

The Journal facility is very similar to the Daily Record of Events, but is kept separate in case you want to keep private information. You may choose to print or exclude your journal when you print your Daily Record of Events page. You may also print just your Journal entries if you wish. Keep it up to date and who knows in years to come you could sell your journal and make a fortune!

Ascend Upgrades

The version of Ascend on the PC Review September cover CD (this issue) is version 4. This was sold for £149 plus VAT to April 1995. In June Ascend version 5 was released. The new version is a major upgrade and contains many new features and improvements, a review of which is on page 102. If you enjoy using Ascend v4 or find it useful we recommend you upgrade to this new version. SoftWerk UK Ltd are running a special upgrade promotion for version 4 users to upgrade for just £99 plus VAT. Please call SoftWerk on 01462 832 244 for further details.

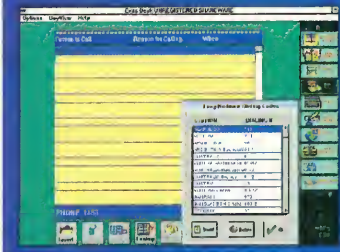
Executive Desk

Shareware • Disk Only

Get your PC to help you organise your life.

To install this fully working package just type 'pcr' and follow the on-screen instructions

Do you need more time in your life? The principle behind this package is to help you make the best use of your time. Executive Desk contains a complete system of Contacts, Schedules, Reminders, To-Do Lists, Notes, Phone Calls, Follow-Ups, Routine Correspondence, Phone Dialler, Unit Converter, World Time and more. You can customise Executive Desk to suit your style of working — so it works for you not against you. With this package we are sure that you will find that getting organised has never been easier. Requires 386PC, Windows 3.1, 4Mb RAM and a mouse.



Money Box

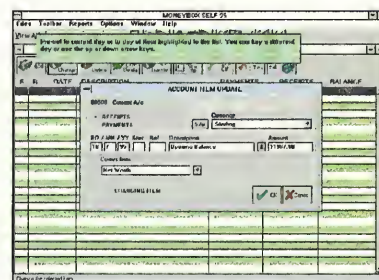
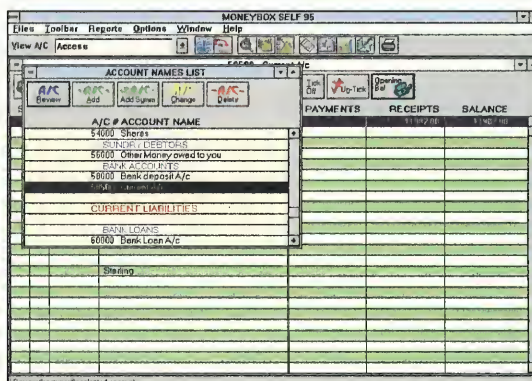
MoneyBox Software Ltd (0151) 356 8000
• CD

To install this demo select 'moneybox' from the CD-ROM's main menu. To run this utility just click on the 'Money Box Windows' icon in the 'Money Box' program group.

Money Box is a finance manager program which is easy to use, but very comprehensive. The program enables you to enjoy the full benefits of budgeting, full financial reporting and graphics. There is full on-line tuition, just select 'getting started' from the help menu. The first 100 entries can be used with this version, but to obtain more you will need to register your copy. To do this just phone the number above. Full details of registration can be found by clicking on 'Send registration fee' which can be found on the introduction screen.

Requires: 386PC, Windows 3.1, VGA and a mouse.

Once you've sorted out your life with Ascend, it's time to sort out your finances by using Money Box.



▲ Keep track of your finances and record movement of money in and, sadly, out of your accounts.

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The Monster Collection is everything you need to start your own graphic resource library. Use the clipart to add impact to all kinds of DTP or Word Processed documents... and use the fonts to give all your publications real designer, typeset quality that's certain to make them stand out from the crowd.

Don't think that because it's free it's low-quality shareware fonts and art. All the fonts are professional, foundry quality and

cover a vast range of styles ranging from elegant and formal to wild and wacky. The clipart is supplied as colour Windows Metafiles (.WMF) so it's scalable to any size with perfect quality and definitely no ugly "jaggies".

The Serif Monster Collection is just a taste of the great publishing and graphics software range available from Serif. If you want the ULTIMATE Fonts and Clipart collection, along with a Suite of powerful DTP and Graphics applications, check out the Serif Publishing Suite CD-ROM and Mega ArtPack bundle. This includes PagePlus 3.0, 7000 Clipart images, 350 TrueType fonts, four additional DTP and graphics applications and more... What's the catch? There is no catch! Call now and make sure YOU get one of the first 150,000 FREE Serif Monster Collections.

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*The disk collection comes on FIVE 1.44Mb disks and due to space limitations is restricted to 65 fonts and 500 clipart images.
**Don't risk spending £££s on expensive software - there's no charge for the Serif Monster Collection, just pay £6.00 shipping, handling and admin. Please have your credit card ready: Visa, MasterCard, Amex or Switch. Serif, PagePlus and DrawPlus are trademarks of Serif, Inc. All other trademarks acknowledged. Collect Free, from Serif in Nottingham - call for details.

The coverdisk hotline is (01451) 810788, open Mon-Fri 3pm-5pm

Airpower

Mindscape (01444) 246333 • CD

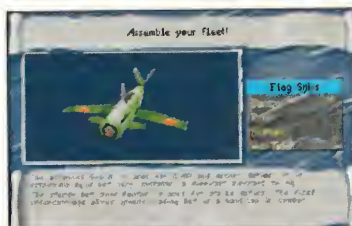
Take to the skies and wrestle control of the empire with this exclusive demo!

Run this demo by selecting 'airpower' from the 'pcr' main menu.

Exclusive to PC Review, a playable demo of one of this year's hottest games. Airpower is a combination of seat-of-the-pants flight sim and RPG set in a parallel world where technology is frozen at 1930's level. The death of the Emperor leaves four possible successors to the throne and your task is to take one of them to the top of the heap.

The game features RPG elements (such as getting towns on your side via diplomacy) and more straight forward gun toting action. In our exclusive demo you take to the air in a trusty Goblin and dogfight your way into the enemy fleet. Check out our exclusive Airpower review on page 60 for the full details and the official PC Review verdict.

Requires: 486DX, 4Mb, VGA, CD-ROM



▲ Take to the skies in your trusty Goblin. Crash in it too.



▲ Listen to your advisors, if you can be bothered.

Battle Beast

7th Level (01223) 421145 • CD

It's a real beast of a game!

Run this demo by selecting 'Battle Beast' from the CD-ROM's main menu.

In this unique beat 'em up you can morph into one of many fully animated Battle Beasts to find and destroy the evil toadman. With 12 fully animated characters, nine different fight areas, two levels of fighting, 300 sound effects, and a variety of secret moves this is a game that will impress your pants off. Take a look at this month's animation feature to find out more about the techniques used to create the amazing animation used in this game.

Requires: 486PC, 4Mb RAM, and VGA display.

Keys:

Cursor keys and Space to fire.
How hard can it be?



The Retros

APL (01608)
641592 • CD

Run this demo by selecting 'The Retros' from the CD-ROM's main menu.

The Retros are a band which play music from the 1930's right up to the 1990's. Their repertoire gets people going wherever they perform. They have produced a sizzling interactive CD-ROM which you can experience this month. You can find them on the Internet so if you like their music, why not simply contact them on: 100657.2247@CompuServe.COM.

Requires: 486PC, 4Mb RAM, and a soundcard.



Fade to Black

Electronic Arts (01753) 549442 • CD

Take on the Morph's (and Tony Hart?) in this adrenaline blaster.

To install this demo select 'Fade to Black' from the CD-ROM's main menu. If you have a soundcard, run SET-SOUND after installing the game. To start the game, type in the command F2B from the installation directory on your hard disk. Conrad Hart is back and this time it's war! For more details on the game turn

to our preview over on page 56.

For a full list of the keys to use please read the read.me file in the fade to black directory.

Requires: 486DX2-66 with 8Mb RAM and 12Mb free on disk, double speed CD-ROM drive (for cinematic scenes), local bus video, install SMARTDRV with a size of 64Kb



Keys:

Keyboard Keys/Play Mode

You are in play mode when you can control the character.

Up Arrow: run

Left, Right Arrow: in game mode: turn left or right,
in cupboard/cabinet mode: next or previous object,
in inventory: select next object of current family of objects

Down Arrow: crouch, to avoid enemy weapons

Right Shift + Up Arrow: Walk

Right Shift + Left Arrow or Right Arrow: Walk left or right

Right Shift + Down Arrow: Turn

Page Up: Small walk

Page Down: Small walk back

I: Go to inventory.

5 on Num Keyboard: In game mode, go Map mode.

Shift Right: In inventory mode: object info

Shift Up Arrow: In game: walk

Shift Left-Right Arrow: Translate left or right

AltGr or V: gun out / gun in

Right Ctrl or B: fire if gun out, otherwise throw hand-grenade

Enter: reload gun

Space: operate lever, cupboard/cabinet, teleporter

J: Jump (while standing up or walking).

H: Far view or near view of Conrad in static view.

K: Far view or near view of Conrad in gun out view.

4 directions on Num Keyboard: To look around 1,2,3,4,5: in game: select the next object of the corresponding family of objects in inventory
L: Load a saved game

S: Save the current game

Esc: Go to main menu (save, load, ... options)

Main Menu Mode

Left, Right Arrow: Turn the wheel.

Up, down: Toggle save mode, load mode, menu.

Cupboard/Cabinet Mode

When you open a cabinet, you go to this mode.

Left, Right Arrow: Select next or previous object

Space: Take the viewed object

ESC: Close the cabinet

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"USM is the best yet"

**85% PC Format
Silver Award**



Ultimate SOCCER manager

Impressions

"Without doubt the best footy management sim we have come across" **94% Gamesmaster**

"Dangerously addictive"

89% PC Power

"Get out there and buy it!"

92% Amiga Action Accolade Award

"A highly playable management game with great options to play any team and do away with much of the boring finance" **84% PC Attack**

"Really, and when all's said and indeed done, a rather smashing footie management sim"

85% Amiga Format

"If PM3 was Manchester United, then Ultimate Soccer Manager has set its roots in Ewood Park with Blackburn Rovers" **8/10 PC Review**

***All Format Gallup Chart**

Impressions

© 1995 Impressions, Unit 9, Princeton Court, Felsham Road, Putney, London SW15 1AZ.



S I E R R A ®

Rise of the Triads Level Editor

Shareware Manchester File Library (0161) 256 2220 • CD

Torture your friends by designing your own fiendish levels for this brilliant classic Doom-a-like.



▲ **Design a multi-player level and see if your friends have any guts. And we mean that quite literally.**

Creating your own levels for this great game from Apogee is a doddle with this easy-to-use level editor. As we never tire of telling you, the best way to learn a new piece of software is to get in there and use it, so we'll look very briefly at how you might design a simple new level from scratch, explaining the concepts as we go along.

Back to basics

You can't start creating your new level until you select the New Level File option in the File menu. You will be asked to give a name for your new level file, let's call this C:\ROTTED\EXAMPLE.RTL. A level with the extension .RTL is a single-player level, while the extension .RTC makes it a multi-player level. ROTT levels are based on a grid system, with X being horizontal and Y vertical.

Each square of the grid (or tile) is made up of three layers:

- 1) Background: usually wall or floor tiles, but also doors and the like.
- 2) Foreground: usually things like player start points, baddies and weapons.
- 3) Info: a series of values that dictate certain properties of a particular tile.

To add a background tile, click on the button marked BG in the button bar; to add a foreground tile, click on the button marked FG; in both these cases, a new screen will appear which shows all the available tiles (pressing Page Up or Page Down will bring up more tiles). To edit the Info for a particular tile, double click on that tile, and a box will appear.

The first four tiles in the top left corner of every ROTT level are very important as they hold certain values that affect the whole level. They must hold the val-

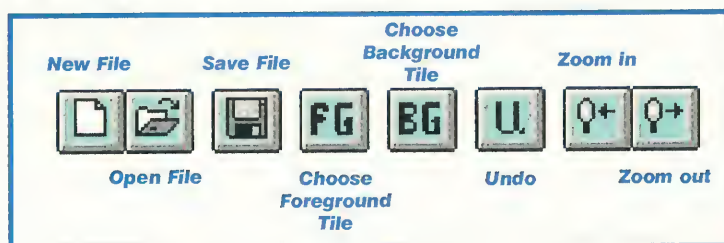
TABLE 1

Tile XY	Background tile	Foreground tile
(0,0)	Floor type Tile value: 180 - 195	Floor height Tile value: (height 1-8) 90 - 97 (height 9-16) 450 - 457
(1,0)	Ceiling/sky type Tile Value: (ceiling) 198-213 (sky) 234-238	Ceiling/sky height Tile Value: (height 1-8) 90 - 97 (height 9-16) 450 - 457
(2,0)	Brightness Tile value: 216 (dark) - 223 (light)	Fog Tile Value: 104 (No fog) - 105 (Fog)
(3,0)	Light Fade Tile Value: 252 (fast) - 267 (slow)	Light sourcing Tile value: 139 illuminates walls



Select the tile to ADD by clicking the LEFT mouse button over it, then position the EDIT cursor over the desired cell and LEFT click. Press/hold the button while dragging over several cells for multiple edits. Press the <Fnd> key or the RIGHT mouse button to turn off EDIT mode.

▲ **There are hundreds of tiles to choose from. Don't ask us what they all do, mind. Far too much to mention, we'll be bound.**



ues shown in table 1: see top of page.

Once that is done, you can start to lay out your level as you will (if you need to find out which tiles are what, then look in the on-line help for a list of tile properties). Use a wall tile (Background) to define your rooms; you can make them any shape you fancy. You must then fill in the rooms with floor "sound areas" (tiles 108-152). To add a door, just add one of the door background tiles.

Enemies are foreground tiles, as are weapons and power ups — see the list in the on-line help for details. And don't forget to add a Start Point for your player (tiles 19 - 22) and an Exit (tile 107). For the Exit tile, you must specify the Next Level value in the Info for that tile.

Finally, you must save the level. Use Map Name in the Edit menu to specify the name of your map, then select Save

Level File. In the new box, choose the file you wish to save to, and the map slot, then click on OK.

Quit Windows then run Setup.exe in the ROTT directory (making sure that you have copied your new level file to the ROTT directory).

Under Use Modified Stuff, select Use new Game Levels and select your new level with the space bar. Go back to the first menu, and select Save settings & Run ROTT.

We don't have enough room here to go into much detail, so you'll need to use the on-line Help to learn more about RottEd and its features.

Requires: Any machine that will run ROTT, full version of ROTT, Windows 3.1 or better.



▲ **A finished ROTT level in all its glory. And it really doesn't take very long to do.**

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This collection includes a very good rendition of VGA Strip Poker, a great game where you try to 'pick up girls', several high-res Windows wallpaper files and a naughty screen saver for DOS which features some nice.... hmmm. Adult - but this lot is suitable to show Grandma....perhaps!

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***HOT NEW RELEASES ***HOT NEW RELEASES ***HOT NEW RELEASES ***

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Software featured in this bundle has only been released in the last few weeks. Includes a chess program, graphing program, jokes database, a mind-mapping program, a banners and posters program, 3 pictorial trueType fonts, a great clock program and a superb font handling program!

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These DOS-based games are "super-hot-off-the-press" and represent excellent value for money. Includes 3D Cyberpuck - which is a stunning soccer derivative, Super Speed - a car racing program, and XenoBall - which is a game that will keep the most avid puzzlers out of trouble for days! Enjoy!

INTRODUCING TERMINAL VELOCITY - A SHAREWARE 'MASTERPIECE'

11 TERMINAL VELOCITY £12.95
Once or twice a year a piece of Shareware comes along - which by its sheer excellence puts it way ahead of the field. Terminal Velocity is one such example. Terminal Velocity is a 3D shooter which is part "Star Wars" and part "Descent". You will take flight in this futuristic game that should come with a "barf" bag! Totally realistic - HUGE levels, insane weapons, modem and network support and TEN channel digital music and sound effects. If you were one of the original Wolfenstein addicts - who then moved on to DOOM, Descent, Heretic, and Rise of Triads - you'll find Terminal Velocity to be a natural progression. Apogee has always had a reputation for producing groundbreaking Shareware entertainment titles - but they have really outdone themselves this time. Wow!

To run Terminal Velocity with any degree of performance you'll require, as a minimum, a 486DX computer with Local Bus video, 4MB RAM, and a VGA screen or better. A Sound Card is also highly recommended.

Terminal Velocity, in a compressed format, is nearly **FOUR MEGABYTES** in size - and expands, after installation, to almost **10 MEGABYTES**. After playing Terminal Velocity you'll never ever quite be the same again! Get **YOUR** copy **NOW!**

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Simon The Sorcerer 2: The Lion, the Wizard and the Wardrobe

Graphic Adventure (0121) 352 0847 • CD

Try out the latest of the
Simon adventures.

To install this demo select 'Simon 2' from the CD-ROM's main menu and follow the instructions.

Simon the Sorcerer is back. If you remember him from first time around, you'll know that during his first outing he managed to get himself tangled up with the evil Sordid, before finally managing to throw him into the Fiery Pits of Rondor. Unfortunately it seems, Sordid has return from the dead and attempts to lure Simon back to his fortress using a wardrobe. Luckily for Simon the spell misfires and he ends up outside a shop owned by his mentor Calypso. Unfortunately the wardrobe has run out of the stuff that powers it so Simon is stuck. This game is attractive, easy to play and most important lots of fun.

Requires: 386 40MHz, 4Mb RAM, Sound Blaster or a compatible soundcard and VGA display.



More fun with Simon.

Actua Soccer

Gremlin Interactive (0114) 2753423 • CD

Kick off the new season with
Gremlin's latest premier
footy simulation.

Run this demo by selecting 'Actua Soccer' from the CD-ROM's main menu and then follow the on-screen instructions..

Gremlin has teamed up with top international and premier league players to bring you this great footy simulator. The game uses the latest motion capture technology to bring you the moves of players such as Chris Woods, Andy Sinton and Graham Hyde. That's not all, the



game goes one step further to create a actual footballing atmosphere by including the words of world cup commentator Barry Davies.

Actua Soccer play as good as it looks. Gasps, at the delicate touches at the edge of the box. Swoon, at that sweeping forward pass from midfield. Cry, when you star striker scores.

Requires: 486PC, 4Mb, Sound Blaster and, of course, a mouse.

Keys

- 1: Far Camera
- 2: Plan View Camera — use 8 & 2 (Numeric) to Zoom in / out
- 3: Goal line — use 8 & 2 (Numeric) to Zoom in / out
- 4: Manual — use the mouse to view
- 5: Player View — use + & - keys to change player
- 6: Wire (default) — 4 & 6 (Numeric) Zoom in/out 8 & 2 (Numeric) Alter up & down
- 7: Ref's View
- 8: Isometric View — 4 & 6 (numeric) Zoom in / out 8 & 2 Alter up & down

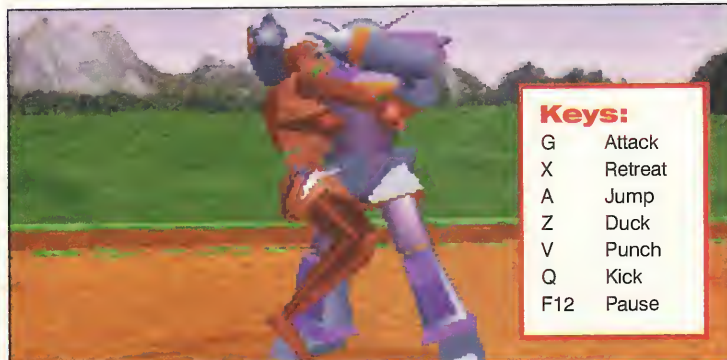
Detail Options

- F1: Pitch Detail — Toggles through 3 modes
F2: Lines Detail — Toggles through 3 modes
F3: Sky Detail — On / Off
F4: Players Detail — Toggles through 3 modes
+ / - : Alters screen size
F12 : Change between hi / lo res

FX FIGHTER

Philips Media (0181) 6892166 • CD

Kick some ass with this
stunning 3D beat 'em up.



Keys:

- | | |
|-----|---------|
| G | Attack |
| X | Retreat |
| A | Jump |
| Z | Duck |
| V | Punch |
| Q | Kick |
| F12 | Pause |

Run this demo by selecting 'FX FIGHTER' from the CD-ROM's main menu. If you do not have a Pentium then try turning down the level of detail and the speed of the game in the game's main menu.

Last issue we gave this game an 'it impressed the pants off me' nine now you can see why. This fully playable demo allows you to fight your way through the computer controller opponents one by one. Victory comes in three ways: Knock Out, having more energy than your opponent at time out, or forcing them out of the ring. The animation is fantastic as character movement is based movement of top martial artists using a motion capture technique.

This really is a great game and after playing the demo we are sure you will be phoning up Philips Media for the full version.

Use the cursor keys to select the options in the demo's main menu.

Requires: 486DX66, 4Mb RAM, Sound Blaster or a compatible sound card and a VGA display.

Fatal Racing

Gremlin Interactive (0114) 2753423 • CD

Is Gremlin's latest racing
car game fatally attractive?

Run this demo by selecting 'Fatal Racing' from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Fatal Racing is not just another racing game for the PC. It set itself apart from the competition by firstly, having test tracks which have stunts such as loops, jumps, hump-back bridges, ramps and even corkscrews! Secondly, the artificial intelligence routine is far in advance of any other racing game, in the fatal racing option the other cars are there to win the race not just to make up the numbers. Combined with astounding 3D graphics the result is a truly stunning game which is fast, exciting, amazingly playable and fatally additive.

Requires: 486PC, 8Mb RAM, and VGA display.

Keys

- F1 Change to in car view
F2 Change to chase view
F3 Change to mirror view
F4 Change to external camera view

ESC Configuration menu
(use arrow keys)



10 out of 10

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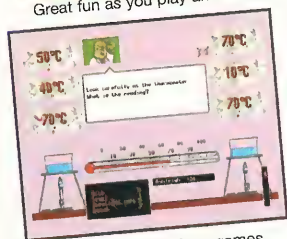
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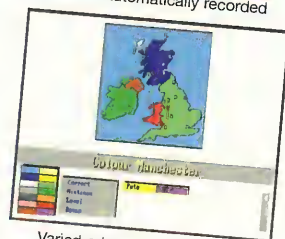
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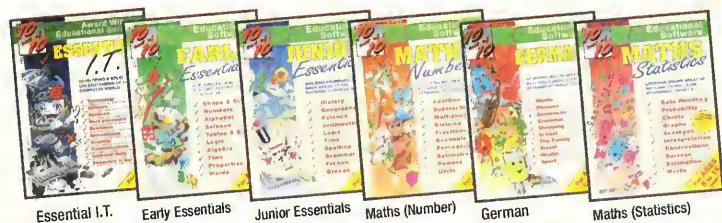


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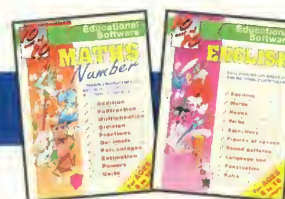
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Speccky time

The Colisseum (0148) 283 7457 • CD/Disk
Four colour graphics and tinny sound. Yes, Spectrum days are here again.

To install, run JPP (or JPP-486) and the old Speccky screen will appear. Press F3 to load a game, type in the name of the snapshot you want to run and hit any key to return to the emulator.

Jet Set Willy II (JSWII): The classic platform game. Tidy up the debris of your wild party before the house keeper will let you 'hit the hay'. E - Left, R - Right and Space for jump.



▲ Knight Lore — loads of fun.

Arkanoid (ARKANOID): 'Breakout' alike in four classic colours. V - Left, R - Right and Return to launch the ball.

Exolon (EXOLON): One very large hero sprite (with jetpack and laser) and a heap of things. Define your own keys.

Player Manager (PLAYERMA): Classic football management simulation. And no, I'm not going to explain the entire game. We didn't need manuals in those days.

Elite (ELITE): One of the defining moments in computer games history. Blast and bargain your way to galactic dominance. Don't worry about the controls. Learning was half the fun.

Knight Lore (KNIGHT): Isometric, platforming fun a go-go. Guide your rather diminutive knight through the deadly quad-chromatic corridors of some suitably medieval living space. Use Q: Up, A: Down, O: Left, P: Right. Requires: 386SX.

Lords of Midnight 1 and 2

Domark (0181) 814132 • CD/disk

This adventure was a must have on the Spectrum (well, it had graphics) and now it's a classic on our coverdisk. Look in MIDNIGHT.TXT for the full story and get stuck in by selecting Lords of Midnight from the PCR menu and hitting Return.

Requires: 386SX and Windows 3.1



Keys

Compass direction keys

- | | |
|---------|--------------|
| 1 North | 2 North-East |
| 3 East | 4 South-East |
| 5 South | 6 South-West |
| 7 West | 8 North-West |

General Options

- | | |
|----------|------------|
| Q Move | A New Game |
| E Look | D Old Game |
| R Think | G Yes |
| T Choose | J No |
| U Night | M Select |
| Esc Exit | |



Apache Longbow

Digital Integration (01276) 684959 • CD

Be a real top gun with this combat sim

To install this demo select 'Apache' from the CD-ROM's main menu. The Apache Longbow fired the first shot in operation 'Desert Storm' and is widely regarded as one of the most exciting 'state-of-the-art' combat helicopters. Now you can take control of the Apache. Use your skill and judgement to seek out and destroy the enemy over the combat zone.

Requires: 486SX 25MHz, DOS 5 or higher, Sound Blaster or AdLib or Gravis soundcard, SVGA, and 9Mb RAM.



Keys

WEAPON CONTROLS

- Arm and select weapon: enter
- Un-arm: ctrl enter
- Fire: Space
- Release Chaff: C
- Release Flare: F
- Auto-chaff / auto-flare on/off: ctrl C
- Hydra-pods up: W
- Hydra-pods down: S

COCKPIT VIEW CONTROLS

- Pilot front view: F2
- Gunner front view: F3
- Look left: F4
- Look right: F5

EXTERNAL VIEW CONTROLS

Apache external view: F6

Weapon view: F7

Weapon target view: F8

Target lock view: F9

Remote view: F10

Spectator view: F11

Zoom in: >

Zoom out: <

MISCELLANEOUS

End Mission: Ctrl ESC

Pause: P

Select time compression: Tab

Cancel time compression: Ctrl Tab

PRIMARY FLIGHT CONTROLS

Cyclic forward: up cursor arrow

Cyclic backward: down cursor arrow

Cyclic left: left cursor arrow

Cyclic right: right cursor arrow

Collective up: Q

Collective down: A

Tail rotor left: Z

Tail rotor right: X

Brakes: B

Autohover: O

COCKPIT CONTROLS

Select left MFD function: [

Select previous left MFD function: shift [

Left MFD on/off: ctrl [

Select right MFD function: shift]

Right MFD on/off: ctrl]

Raise moving map magnification: >

Lower moving map magnification: <

IHADSS contrast adjust: I

Select next waypoint: N

Select previous waypoint: shift N

Select next target: Backspace

Select previous target: +

Lock / unlock target: L

TADS view / select TADS mode: T

Raise TADS magnification: >

Lower TADS magnification: <

Boresight mode on/off: Y

Helmet tracking view: H

Select radar mode: R

Switch radar off: ctrl R

Select radar range: G

Select radar target priority: M

Hold / resume radar update: U

Select tactical display update: K

PNVS on / off: V

ECM on / off: E

Transmit reconnaissance data:

DFUsE — Dark Forces Level Editor

Shareware Manchester File Library (0161) 256 2220 • CD

Create your own levels for this cracking classic game.

Install from PCR main menu and then type DFUSE at DOS prompt.

Not content with just offering you a level editor for Rise of the Triads, we go one better with an excellent editor for LucasArts' Dark Forces. There's no way we could go into the intricacies of its operation here, so look out for a full-scale tutorial in a future issue. In the meantime, if you're feeling confident, you can have a go yourself. The main program is actually a front end for a series of utilities that allow you to alter almost everything in the game; for instructions on how to use them, consult the documentation that is supplied with the program.

Requires: Any machine that will run Dark Forces, and a copy of the game.

Animator Studio

Autodesk (01282) 618666 • CD

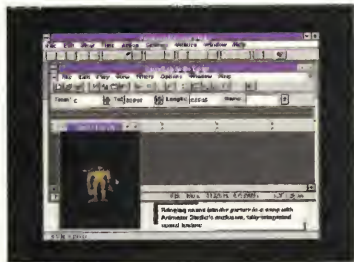
Sound, paint, action!

Run this demo by simply selecting 'Animator Studio' from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Animator Studio is a 2D animation tool for windows which can make even the most boring presentation look like

something out of Batman Forever! Almost. This demo will show you how easy it is for this package to make your imagination come alive.

Requires: 486/33MHz, 8Mb, Windows 3.1 and a soundcard.



▲ The rolling demo takes a look at just a few of Studio's features



▲ Take a look at page 115 to read more about this great package

Phantasmagoria

Serria (01734) 303 322 • CD

This nightmare is guaranteed to scare your pants off!

Run this demo by selecting 'Phantasmagoria' from the CD-ROM's main menu and then click on the 'Phantasmagoria' icon in its windows program group.

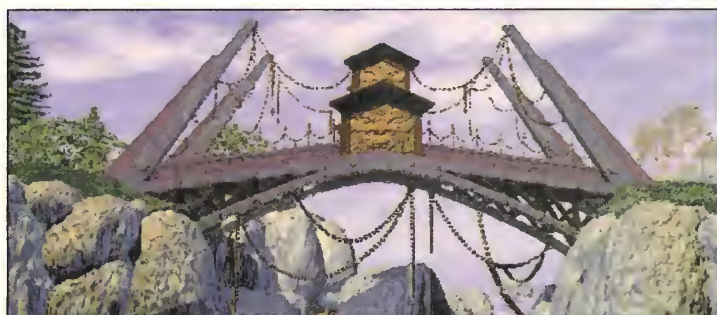
This is a real chiller of a game combining classic horror with a modern psychological thriller. Written by renowned adventure writer Roberta Williams the game features some of the most advanced digital effects yet seen on the PC. So sit back and be afraid ... be very afraid!

Requires: 486PC, 8Mb RAM, Windows 3.1, a soundcard and a mouse.

It may have a Habitat interior — Gothic style — but there'll be no pillow talk in this bedroom. ►



▲ Wandering around the mansion reveals a nasty line in toys.



▲ Talk about a bridge too far. Crossing this rickety looking contraption may prove more difficult than you think.

CD-ROM/Cover disk checks...

The PC Review cover disks and CD-ROM discs are rigorously checked and scanned for all known viruses at each stage of production. However, cover disks and cover CDs are used at the reader's own risk. PC Review can therefore accept no responsibility for damage to either data or hardware caused by the use of our disks or CD-Roms. If circumstances dictate that we are unable to supply the stated program, we will endeavour to provide alternative software.

Sorry, but we cannot be held responsible for content changes.

(01451) 810788

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If you're having problems finding your way around the cover disks or CD-ROM disc, or making them work with your PC, then try the PC Review cover disks/CD-ROM disc helpline on (01451) 810788. The helpline number operates between 3.00 and 5.00pm weekdays

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DiskXpress, Unit 7, Willow Court, Bourton Industrial Park, Bourton-on-the-water, Gloucestershire GL54 2HQ. Please DO NOT send the cover disk or CD-ROM disc back to the PC Review editorial office. We are sorry, but we do not hold stocks of spare CDs or disks.

Name

Address

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WIN A PRIMAL RAGE COIN-OP WORTH £30000

No horrible pun intended, but the game where you get to do battle as a dino is still the rage with all arcade-going punters of note. To transfer this experience to the comfort of your home all you have to do is pop along to Dixons, buy a copy of Time Warners home version, pick up the complimentary scratchcard and rub off the appropriate panel.



Then check the November issue of PC Review to see whether you've got the winning number. Couldn't be simpler, eh? And the prize is fantastic!

No purchase necessary. The winning number will also be printed in the October issues of NMS, Sega Magazine, Computer and Video Games, and the November issue of Mean Machines. Readers of these magazines will also be eligible to enter. Not open to employees or their relatives of the following: EMAP Consumer magazines, Dixons or Time Warner.

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NEWS

The much-heralded move towards TV-quality software seems to have arrived. And soon you can enjoy all of the benefits of MPEG without any of the fuss...

MPEG revolution finally takes off

Games with TV-quality pictures and graphics are set to storm the PC following announcements by three industry giants — Compaq, Microsoft and Philips. At present, PCs can only display TV-quality moving pictures at full-screen resolution via an MPEG card. Without this extra hardware, PCs are limited to displaying video at 25 frames a second in a small, quarter-screen sized Window, because filling larger areas reduces the number of frames which can be displayed, making the visual display somewhat unpalatable.

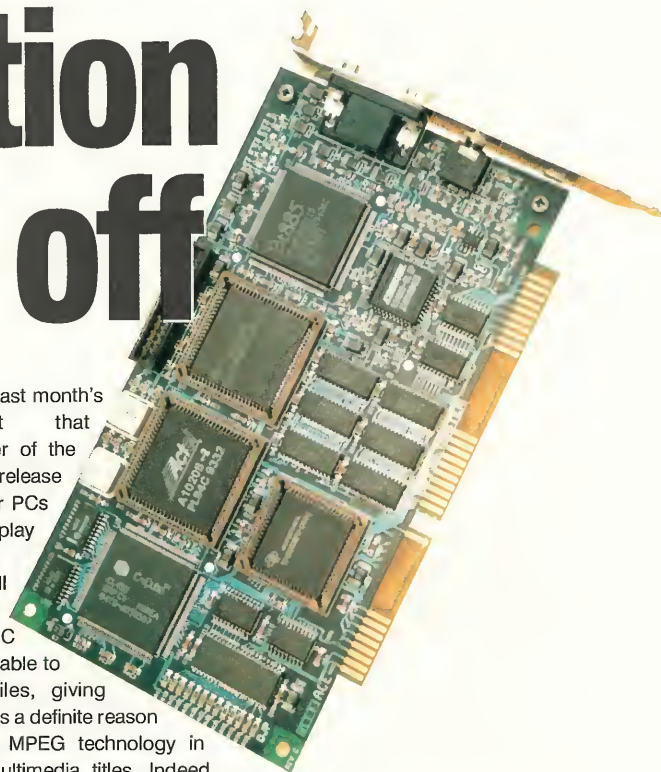
Despite the obvious advantages of MPEG, PC Review broke the story in Issue 25 (October 1993) but the technology has been slow to take off. This is partly due to the extra expense involved

in fitting an MPEG card, and partly because only a few manufacturers are producing MPEG specific software. However, this is about to change. Compaq, the world's largest PC manufacturer, has announced that it intends to release a range of its Presario PCs with MPEG cards pre-installed. Industry sources speculate that the American manufacturer could sell a vast 500,000 MPEG PCs before 1996.

The MPEG format is also receiving full support from Microsoft, who plans to release a driver for Windows 95 that allows you to play MPEG files without any additional hardware. This won't delay the release of Windows 95, however, because the MPEG driver will be available as an add-on disk later on.

This follows last month's announcement that Philips, pioneer of the VideoCD, is to release a CD-i card for PCs which will also play VideoCD titles.

The news will ensure a huge number of PC owners will be able to play MPEG files, giving software houses a definite reason to start using MPEG technology in games and multimedia titles. Indeed, Microsoft is already beavering away on an MPEG version of its best-selling multimedia encyclopedia, Encarta. Watch out for more news as we get it.



▲ Very soon you'll no longer have to fiddle around with installing MPEG cards, thanks to Compaq.

One to Watch...

The Need for Speed

Speed along a senselessly... Electronic Arts' road-racing game features some of the world's most glamorous cars, including the Lamborghini Diablo and Dodge Viper. There are eight tracks (the 3DO version had only three) which have been lovingly reproduced from film footage. It'll zoom into view October-ish. For more information on the game contact EA on (01753) 549442.



▲ Getting rave reviews and sales from the 3DO fraternity early last year, Electronic Arts' superb race game, Need for Speed, has been especially updated for PC.

Muppets take to the high CDs

Fans of the enduring and endearing Muppet series are going to be thrilled to billy-ho by Activision's forthcoming family adventure game based on the new movie, Muppet Treasure Island. It will contain film footage of the characters who appear in the movie, including Tim Curry who stars alongside Kermit, Miss Piggy and other Muppets favourites. Expect it in early 1996.



Call Activision on (0181) 742 9400.

Crime and Punishment

Nick Ross clones (and we hope there aren't too many of you left) will no doubt applaud the detailed reconstructions of cannibalism and acid bath deaths in The Crime Files. This interactive CD-ROM from CD Vision examines the most infamous crimes of the last 100 years, and is designed to help you understand when, where and how they were committed. Starting with the crime, place or period, you will be able to access a wealth of information on all manner of evil deeds, ranging from the Great Train Robbery to the theft of the Mona Lisa.

The Crime Files was written and produced by BAFTA award winner Elkan Allan, one of the leading experts in making television programs about crime. It includes over 150,000 words of text, 2,000 photographs and archive footage, as well as a "Whodunit?" quiz relating to information contained in the CD.

The Crime Files will be available on PC CD-ROM at £39.99 and MPEG at £49.99 complete with a rogues gallery

of villains from Jeffrey Dahmer to the Myra Hindley — plus details of their heinous crimes. We'll have a full review of The Crime Files next issue.

Contact CD Vision on (0171) 204 7764.



The infamous Myra Hindley.

BIG MAC

All those who subscribe to the culture of body fascism can now take comfort from the latest craze to hit our health-conscious, PC-owning brethren in America. Over eight publishers currently compete for the hearts and bodies of our more portly American chums. As anyone who's ever visited a college over there knows, far from being lithe and Californian, for the average citizen the rot sets in at the campus refectory.

Of the multitude of programs available, Dieters Edge 2000 comes out tops. In addition to its comprehensive

nutritional database, it lists almost every type of active exercise — from weight training to painting a wall.

Several American publishers are now eyeing English fatties with relish — so you'd better stuff yourself silly while you still have time.



Slimmer of 1985 — now thin.

Sierra toys in

After an initial delay, Sierra is set to launch a new multimedia series for children aged four to 10. Playtoons is a series of interactive storybooks which come to life with a click of the mouse. Each story includes a construction kit which allows children to create their own stories by selecting backgrounds, objects and characters from a menu. Over the next two years, Sierra plans to

release 15 titles on CD-ROM, all of which run under Windows. The first three will be Uncle Archibald, in which two mischievous boys accidentally create a gang of monsters, Spirou, which is based on a famous French cartoon character, and The Secret of the Castle, a medieval adventure.

For more information on Sierra's edutainment projects ring (01734) 303322.



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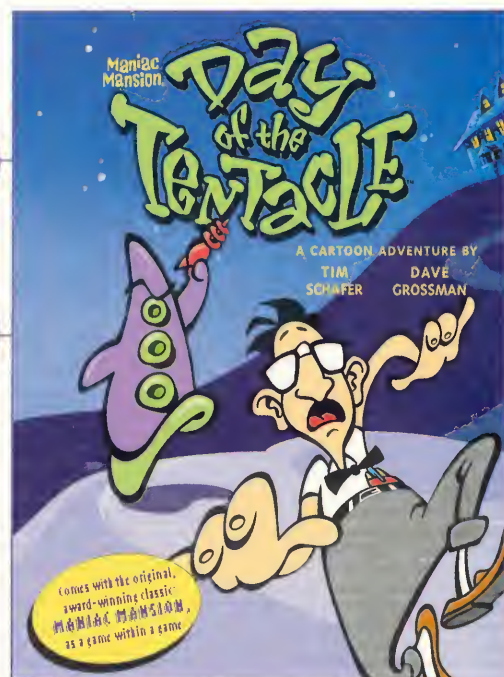
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Interplay



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CHILLING...

90% Game Pro -
"top quality adventure"

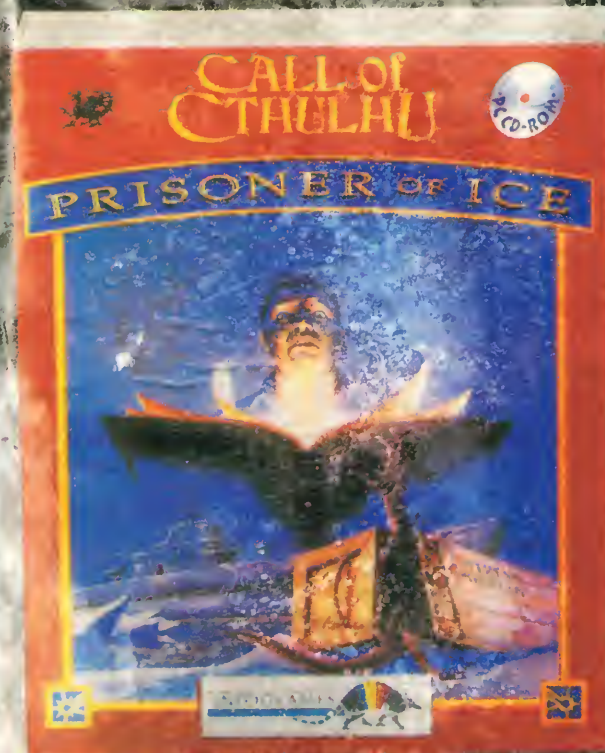
89% PC Games -
"gripping - wouldn't
hesitate to recommend it"

PC Zone Recommended -
"Infogrames' best adventure
to date
- Watch out LucasArts"

PC Review -
"gorgeous - best in
the genre..."

C & VG Hit 91% -
"a really well-planned
adventure"

PC Attack -
"What a game - huge,
beautiful, atmospheric
and stuffed with head



PRISONER OF ICE

CD ROM

Monsters, magic, spies and the supernatural collide in this graphic, time-travel adventure that will make your blood run cold.

The non-stop action moves from a secret Nazi base in the South Pole to a Royal Navy Submarine, from the Falklands to Buenos Aires and beyond.

In chilling 3D detail the terrors seem all too real and, as the nightmare unfolds, only the coolest survive!

Prisoner Of Ice - The first ever adventure game to use "Motion Capture" for all character rendering is in the chiller cabinet at all good game stockists now.



Holy Smoke! Batman comes to Thorpe Park

With *Batman Forever* raiding wallets worldwide, Acclaim will no doubt be depositing credits at the batbank with the release of its game of the film. The video game will be on show at Thorpe Park as part of the Acclaim *Batman Forever Experience*, where you can also

see the new Batmobile, plus prototypes of the Batboat and Batplane and many of the costumes used in the movie.

Batman Forever will be spreading its latex wings on CD-ROM later this year. Acclaim is also working on a CD-ROM version of *Street Fighter: The*

Movie. Based on the celluloid version of the popular beat 'em-up, it features digitised images of Jean-Claude Van Damme and a host of other thespians who appeared in the film. Kylie Minogue in a game? We wait with baited breath...

Contact Acclaim on (0171) 343 5000.

Multimedia gets the Klik treatment

From the makers of *Klik & Play*, *Klik & Create* is designed so that anyone from beginners to professional users can put together their own multimedia business presentations, screen savers, and educational software with the minimum of fuss. The program will be compatible with Windows 95 and Win-G graphics drivers, and supports the .AVI video standard, Quicktime for Windows, CD Audio and MCI. It also features video tutorials and on-screen help, as well as including an extensive library of 3D images, animated objects and backgrounds. So save up your pennies, buy one when it's launched in September, and impress your friends, claiming "and

here's one I made earlier". (Then again, perhaps not.) The whole shebang will set you back around £49.99 and for more information give Europress Software a call on (01625) 859333.



Cirrus sprints ahead



Cirrus Logic claims it has the graphics accelerator equivalent of the Jaguar XJ220 on its hands. Its new VisualMedia accelerator, "catchily" named the CL-GD5462, can shift a whopping 500Mb of data around every second.

The device is crammed with technology which enables it to handle video and 3D work at jaw-dropping speeds. Its numerous features include line and polygon drawing acceleration, hardware zooming, a 64-bit graphics engine and direct conversion from the different colour pallets found in film sequences to those used on PCs.

We hope to have one of the first units for review in a forthcoming issue.

In brief

Barclays goes on-line

Barclays Bank is launching a new on-line service which enables customers to pay bills, check statements, transfer funds and set-up or change standing orders via a modem. The service uses software which runs under Windows, and will be available from the last quarter of 1995. To find out more, call the free helpline on (0800) 100123 between 7am and 11pm

Windows 95 brought to book

With Windows 95 looming in the clouds, IDG Books is releasing a range of titles which aim to demystify Microsoft's new operating system. The Windows 95 Bible, priced £29.99, is a comprehensive reference manual which explains how Windows 95 works, whilst Windows 95 for Dummies, priced £18.99, is aimed at beginners. Other titles include Real Life Windows 95 and Windows 95 Secrets.

Contact IDG Books on (0181) 579 2652 for more information.

Death of a thousand screens

Bored with flying toasters, starfields and fishtanks? Then why not sample the more visceral delights of id Software's *Doom II* Screen Saver. It features all your favourite *Doom II* monsters, and you can watch them die in a number of violent ways. Guaranteed to amuse and delight. Call GT Interactive on (0171) 258 3791 for more information.

Internet-ready PCs

Elonex is offering a range of Internet-ready bundles with its PCs. The bundles comprise of a choice of internal or external, 14.4 Kbps or 28.8 Kbps modems, comms software and free registration with UK Internet access provider Easynet plus 45 days' free access. Prices range from £75.00 to £145.00. For further information, call Elonex on (0181) 452 4444.

Amazing Amazon

Iona Software is plunging you right into the heart of the Amazon jungle on a life-saving mission. The designer of its forthcoming rain-forest-inspired educational game visited the Amazon to research the product, which includes sound recordings, artwork and music. The *Amazon Trail* costs £19.95 from major software outlets. Contact Iona on (0181) 241 8925.

One to Watch...

Shell Shock

Now here's a tank game with attitude. It features slick graphics, funky music, huge weapons and tank personnel who look more like a rap group than your usual boys in khaki. Oh, and the gameplay's rather special too. Due out November. Further information from Core Design on (01332) 297797.



hit names @ hit squad

applying a { { { { {feelgood}} } } } price tag

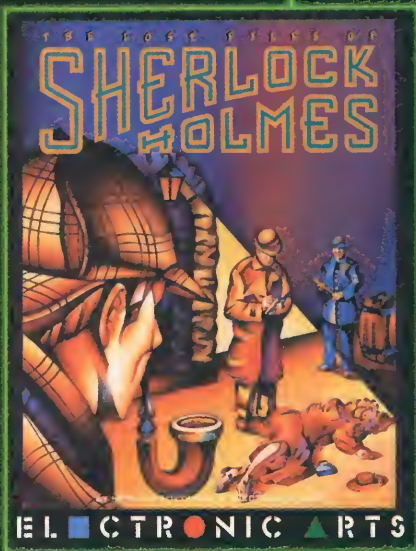
"This won't disappoint you."

PC
REVIEW

"Sherlock
is a bit
special."
ZERO



93%



"You ain't seen
nothing better -
super atmosphere."

"It'll blow your
mind... pure action
all the way."

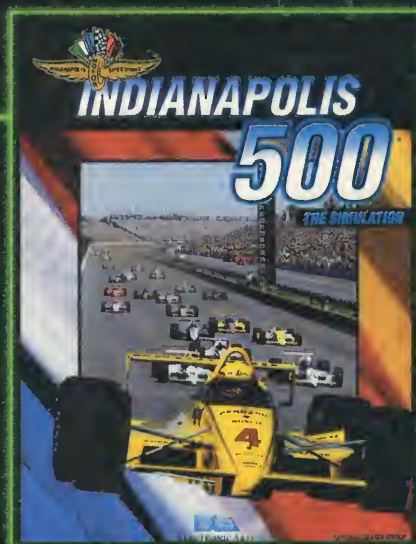
RAZE



93%

"The best
race game
money
can
buy."

"Gaspingly
fast... not for
the faint-
hearted."



81%



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Gadget Corner

Natty numbers to check out.

Routefinder

Philips, £199.99, dial 100 and ask for Freephone Routefinder

Traffic jams, roadworks, lorry shed its load in the fast lane of the M4 — sometimes driving can be a real pain in the gluteus maximus. Philips' hand held electronic route planner contains 38,000 UK travel routes provided by the AA, and will reroute your journey to avoid heavy traffic. The size of a portable phone, it has its own keyboard and is back-lit for night driving.



AeroDuet

Creative Labs, £117.50, (01734) 344744

Optical mice are nothing new, you might think. However, Creative Labs has invented something a bit different — a mouse that flies, or for want of a better term, a bat. The AeroDuet mouse doesn't work like other infra-red mice. It doesn't need a special mat, and will continue to function even when you're holding it in the air. Very useful for cluttered desks. The AeroDuet pack also comes with a pen which works in the same way.



CD Mobile

Portable Add-ons, £350.00, (01483) 440777

Notebooks are small. CD-ROM drives are large. Problem? Not if you buy CD Mobile, an external double speed drive with a Type II PC Card (PCMCIA) interface. It can be powered off its own batteries which means that it doesn't put any load on the notebook battery, and can also run off the mains. The unit supports CD-ROM, CD-i, VideoCD and Photo CD, and also doubles as an audio CD player so that you can listen to music while typing up reports.



Iomega Zip Drive

Iomega, £150, (0800) 898563

If you don't own a CD-ROM drive and you're fed up with the tiny storage capacity of floppy disks and annoyed that you can't save to CDs then hardware manufacturer Iomega has just the thing for you. Its new Zip drive provides up to 100Mb of storage in a removable cassette no bigger than a normal 3.5" floppy. With a price of £150 for the drive, and £15 for a cartridge, the ZIP drive sounds too good to be true — we'll find out next month when we hope to bring you a full review.



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Tory MPs in Lemmings shocker!

With the possible exception of Hugh Grant's recent adventure in Los Angeles, the silliest publicity stunt of the year belongs to games publisher Psygnosis. To promote Lemmings 3D, Psygnosis sent out a press release which suggested that the problems currently facing the Tory Party were closely simulated by the Lemmings series of games. The object of the games is to prevent the suicidal rodents from hurling themselves to their deaths by assigning them jobs such as digging through rocks or building bridges over chasms. Psygnosis asked whether the Prime

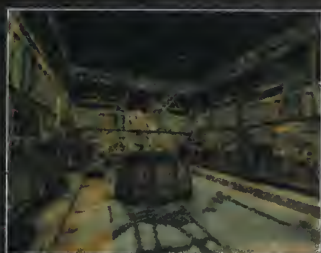
Minister should act like a basher and ditch his political enemies, become a bridge builder between the pro- and anti-European wings of the party or act as a blocker between the left and right factions of the party. A fully-costumed Lemming was let loose on College Green at Westminster to hand out copies of the game to Tory MPs and provide tips on how to get them out of their Lemmings-like dilemma. Needless to say, they weren't impressed. *Lemmings 3D* will be released on CD-ROM on September 7th. Contact Psygnosis on (0151) 282 3000.



One to Watch...

Azrael's Tear

Intelligent Games is currently working on a futuristic 3D adventure in which you play a high-tech thief who specialises in stealing rare and religious artefacts. Your goal is to recover the Holy Grail, but you're also in competition with other sneaks and thieves. This slick and atmospheric game will be published by Mindscape towards the end of the year.



Mindscape can be contacted on (01444) 246333.

Orchid plugs NuSound card

Orchid is to launch a revolutionary new soundcard which combines wavetable synthesis with 3D surround sound and full games compatibility. The NuSound PnP supports the Intel/Microsoft Plug and Play specification, and is the first product to combine all these features onto a single board. The NuSound features 16-bit

stereo sound and is compatible with SoundBlaster Pro, General Midi, Windows Sound System and Roland, amongst others. It is expected to retail at £129.00. For more information, contact Orchid on (01256) 479898



One to Watch...



Sierra Ultra Pinball: Outpost Odyssey

Not just another pinball game, this novel table is based on Sierra's space colonisation game, Outpost. The player has a realistic 3D view of the table,

and there are all the usual features and targets. But here's the twist — you can also build space colonies by guiding the ball into specific areas. Due to hit the software shelves some time in September. Call Sierra on (01734) 303322

Oxford presses on to CD-ROM

Oxford University Press printed its first book in 1478. Just over 500 years later, Britain's oldest publisher is about to release its first multimedia titles. The Fish Who Could Wish by John Bush and Korky Paul is an interactive version of the successful children's book, and is narrated by Robbie Coltrane. Also released is A Christmas Story by the famous children's illustrator, Brian Wildsmith. Both titles will be available from 28th September priced £29.99. For further information contact OUP on (01865) 267979.



Win a Bitmap Brothers jacket!

To celebrate the release of the Bitmap Brothers compilation, which includes games such as The Chaos Engine, Gods and Speedball 2, Warner Interactive is giving away two exclusive Bitmap Brothers jackets. To have a chance of winning one of these desirable garments, simply write the answer on a postcard along with your name and address and send it to:

Bitmap Compo
PC Review
Priory Court
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3AU

QUESTION:

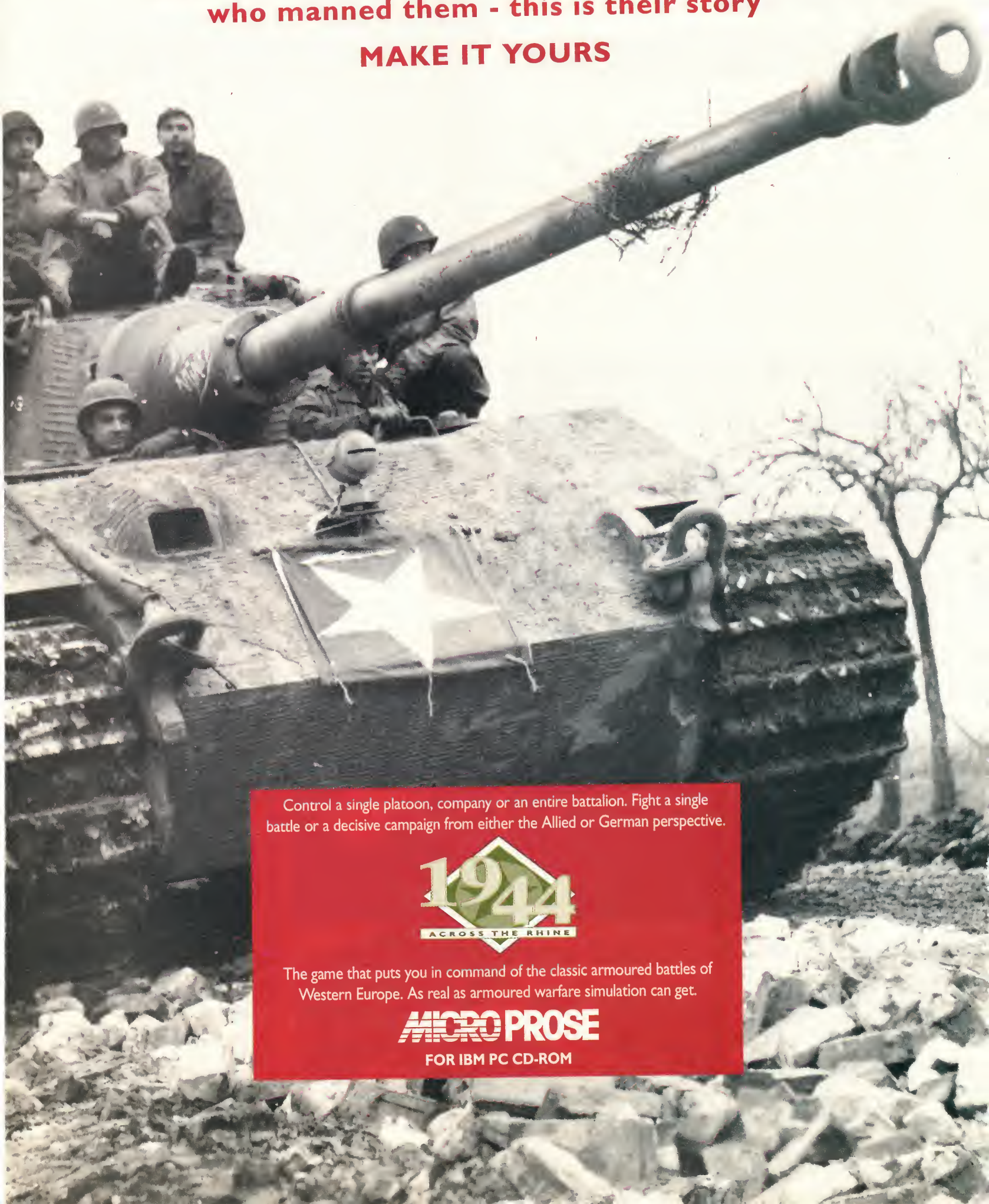
Which of the following is NOT a Bitmap Brothers game:
Xenon 2, Speedball 2, Gods, Wing Commander 3?

RULES:

1. Employees of Warner Interactive Entertainment and EMAP may not enter.
2. The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence may be entered into.
3. The winners will be notified by post.
4. Entries will be accepted by post only, and the closing date is September 15th.

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Tripping the Light Fantastic

Imagine a large expanse of grass covered in over-pierced, under-washed, chlorophyll-coated sixth-formers, all supping tepid lager from paper cups. Welcome to the Phoenix Festival — four days of rock, rap, indie, dance, comedy and greasy food. It's Glastonbury on a smaller scale, with fewer jugglers — one small corner of Shakespeare Country is invaded by 50,000 hedonistic youths. Or at this particular point in time, 49,999 hedonistic youths and one very worried journalist.

My worry is the photographer, who was falling-down drunk before we'd even got off the bus (thank heavens for autofocus cameras). He's standing down the front of the main stage now, shouting up at the singer, "Over here. No, here. Smile. Come on, smile. Say 'cheese'." The singer in question is gangster rapper Ice-T, a man who possesses both a fearsome reputation and one of America's largest private collections of firearms.

In the interests of self-preservation we leg it backstage, where we meet Eugene Riecanaky. Eugene is the senior designer at new multimedia publishers EXP, and is responsible for the graphics in Flux, an "audio-visual experience" that will soon be available to PC owners. Eugene doesn't own a sub-machine-gun. We can talk to him.

So what's it all about then? "Flux is a

home machine for kids who go clubbing, get luvved up, and want to continue the party vibe rather than go to bed. They play their favourite CDs and the program generates visuals in time to the music."

Once you've installed the software on your hard drive, you can run it in conjunction with any audio CD played on your PC. It runs under Windows. Examples of graphics from the program, which is not due out till the end of the year, were running on TV screens in EXP's hospitality tent. It's everything you would expect, with an emphasis on round rather than square shapes, lots of neon colours and swirly effects. Looks a bit like a souped-up screen saver, to be honest.

State of Flux

Eugene concurs. "What we're looking to do with the PC version is to take over from programs like After Dark. People can just have a small box in the corner of the screen running Flux while they're working. A lot of people play audio CDs in their CD-ROM drive while they're running a spreadsheet or word processor. Flux would add another dimension, running in sync with the music."

Only time will tell whether the program will genuinely appeal to anyone but the raver on a chemical come-down. Eugene points out, almost as an afterthought, that Flux will of course work

It's called Flux, it's coming soon to the PC, and it promises all the fun of a rave in the comfort of your own home. Adam Peters goes to a field a hundred miles away to try it out. (Doh!)

The Kids Say...



▲ "It would be great to have visuals to chill out to at home. I look forward to that. The people here really are the salt of the earth."

Bradley Needham, Manchester



▲ "If the home computer graphics are anything like the visuals here, they'll be excellent. They're ace. Totally mind-blowing."

Cheryl Wild, Stockport



▲ Examples of the PC-generated, swirling visuals in EXP's hospitality tent. The company is hoping to incorporate them into screen savers.

with any music, not just techno. It comes as no surprise, though, that the company's first music release (EXP is also a record label) is a techno compilation. The CD version includes software that will run in conjunction with Flux to provide special extra visuals.

Rave New World

Having visuals to chill out to at home isn't a new idea. In fact, it first came to fruition in 1992 with a video called 'Dr Devious: Dance in Cyberspace' which provided 40 minutes of 3D computer visuals set to some original techno tunes. Of course, you quickly got bored of listening to the same old trippy tunes over and over, so you turned off the sound and played some CDs.

That's the essence of Flux, with the one difference that being a multimedia product, it has the ability for the graphics to react to changes in the music. We reckon it's more interesting if the visuals are out of sync with the music, but that's just us being enigmatic.



Predicting the future, Eugene says: "I think we'll have CD-ROMs that are more like interactive music videos. I thought the Prince Interactive CD was such a wasted opportunity. You just get a choice like 'click left for Prince videos, click right for Prince records'. I want to see Prince talking to camera. I want to ask him questions. That's the way things need to go. Windows '95 has got MPEG full motion video support. That's a step in the right direction."



▲ Refugees from ganster rapper Ice-T's show at the Phoenix.

Marquee Moon

So much for the home light show, it's time to see what the people behind Flux can do when they've got a whole giant tent to fill with their projections. EXP have provided all the visuals for the Phoenix dance tent, which is being run by the crew from North London's Megadog club. The monthly club is legendary for its use of visuals and Eugene Riecanaky has pulled out all the stops here. A few coloured circles on a 14" monitor will always seem pretty sad in comparison.

"Obviously having a few mates round and putting Flux on isn't going to be the same as a crowded tent," concedes Eugene, "you've just got to make it as good as possible".

Heeding this advice, we make our best possible excuses and leave in the direction of the dancefloor.

It crossed our minds that Ice-T can't find us if we're on another planet.

GALLUP PC CHARTS

FULL PRICE

Like house prices and shares, they can fall as well as rise... This month's positions for the best-selling software for your PC

TM	LM	TITLE	BY	CHANGE
1	(6)	Doom II	Virgin	▲
2	—	X-Wing	Lucas Arts	■
3	(3)	Sim City 2000	Maxis	*
4	(2)	Ultimate Soccer Manager	Impressions	▼
5	(1)	Theme Park	Bullfrog	▼
6	(13)	X-Wing Triple Pack	Lucas Arts	▲
7	(4)	FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts	▼
8	—	LucasArts Adventure Pack	LucasArts	●
9	(5)	TIE Fighter	LucasArts	▼
10	(5)	Premier Manager 3	Grenlin	▼
11	(12)	Nascar	Virgin	▲
12	—	Cannon Fodder 2	Virgin	■
13	(8)	TFX	DID/Ocean	▼
14	(20)	Colonization	MicroProse	▲
15	(16)	Dawn Patrol	Anco	▲
16	—	Microsoft Flight Sim 5.1	Microsoft	■
17	—	Mavis Beacon 2	Mindscape	■
18	(15)	Fantasy Manager	Anco	▼
19	—	Ecstatica	Psygnosis	■
20	(7)	Discworld	Psygnosis	▼

CD-ROM

1	—	Star Trek TNG: A Final Unity	MicroProse	●
2	—	FX Fighter	Philips	●
3	(2)	IndyCar Racing	Virgin	▲
4	(1)	Theme Park	Bullfrog	▼
5	—	Discworld	Psygnosis	■
6	—	Ultimate Doom	GT	●
7	—	Full Throttle	LucasArts	■
8	(3)	Dark Forces	LucasArts	▼
9	—	Flight Unlimited	Virgin	■
10	—	FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts	■

BUDGET

1	(2)	Magic Boy	Empire	▲
2	(8)	Brian Lara's Cricket	Audiogenic	▲
3	—	Terminal Velocity demo	US Gold	●
4	(3)	Detroit	Impressions	▼
5	—	Doom	Titanium Seal	●
6	(7)	Dune 2	Hit Squad	▲
7	(9)	Universal Clip Art	gameTek	▲
8	(6)	Easy to Learn Computing	Disc Distribution	▼
9	(5)	D-Zone	One Stop Direct	▼
10	—	Indiana Jones Fate of Atlantis	Kixx	●

KEY: TM = THIS MONTH, LM = LAST MONTH

UP = ▲ DOWN = ▼ NO CHANGE = * NEW ENTRY = ● RE-ENTRY = ■

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Annoyed by cutesy wutesy, teeny weeny graphics cluttering
your screen as your computer sits groaning in an idle torpor
on your desk?

Do you wish to inflict an unspeakable atrocity on those flying
toasters and floating fish that plague your valuable space with
annoying frequency ?

Then get some fear...the DOOM 2 Screen Saver is here!


Experience your jaw drop on the keyboard, your mouse run
for cover and your eyeballs bulge to bursting point in disbelief
as all hell breaks loose in front of you.

This Doomtastical splatterfest runs riot through four
different modules as the vilest creatures from Doom 2 parade
via a fully automatic installation program.

The Doom 2 screen saver invades Microsoft Windows 3.1,
Norton Desktop for Windows and Berkeley Systems' After
Dark 3.0 with ease.


Available from good stockists everywhere





Communications
is the key in the
military.
This Javelin sur-
face-to-air missile
team uses digital
messaging to
send and receive
orders.

Missile C



From the Battle of Hastings to the Battle of Port Stanley, and now to the battles in Bosnia, the military relies heavily on the PC. Charles Bickers from Janes Defence Weekly delves into the weird world of the mechanised warriors....

If ever information is critical, it's at the sharp end of combat. Information Technology at the extreme is an immediate, all-weather, 24-hours-a-day mission critical. Warfighters, either in land, sea or air theatres of operation want relevant, reliable information at every stage of procedures to help them achieve their goals. Now, more than ever, there are new means of communication available to combatants, planners, logisticians and commanders, and making it relevant starts with processing.

At the sharp end the 'grunt' on the ground is normally interested in three things: Where am I? Where is the enemy? And what do I have to do? The PC on the battlefield may help, but it's only as good as its sources. What PCs can do is bring information together and represent it neatly. What is new about today's soldiers, sailors and airmen is that they are increasingly the product of the home computer generation, they are at ease with computers and they are ready for the digital battlefield.

Most western armies now rely on a US satellite system called GPS (Global Positioning System), which enables them to be told, via a handheld receiver, their exact position anywhere on or above the earth. By adding some processing power, even a humble PC can convert the position data and show the user's position, speed, direction and route on a digital map. PCs on the battlefield can bring a number of capabilities into play and, aside from game-playing, they're pretty similar to the machines used in an average home office, but in a more extreme environment. The first major test for battlefield computers came with the Gulf War. Faced with a theatre of battle they had not prepared for, many of the allied force's computer systems were not up to the job as they had been designed for war in Europe. Portable, commercial PC-based laptops were immediately sought by the British and other

Command

The Gulf War saw portable PCs used in the field in anger for the very first time. ►

Built to survive: the US Army's V2LC lightweight computer unit is based on 486 processing and is used for anything the soldier might make use of. ►



armed forces to fulfil roles ranging from supply management to communications and supplies. One of the companies to respond to the need for more computing was Grid, now Grid Defence Systems. Piers Rushton, the company's Managing Director said PCs were now understood by the military as a powerful tool and that applications are growing all the time. He states, "It's brought high technology and the latest processors and storage devices into the field. One of the best examples of possible use is linking PCs with Global Positioning Systems and other onboard data."

Battlefield over view

What comes naturally to the PC however is communication. Warfighters require an input device that can control the radio links. For example, the data from a tank, including fuel, position, speed ammunition and damage state could be fed into the PC. The computer then compresses and codes the data and squirts it in a burst transmission across the radio network to the commander's main computer. If all of the vehicles are equipped he can then have a complete overview of the battlefield.

Leading the way in use of computers on the front line is the USA. The US Army's Battlefield Digitisation initiative has seen, amongst many others, the introduction of the Lightweight Computer Unit (LCU) to fulfil a range of missions for the Army. LCU is a family of

ruggedised PCs supplied by US systems giant SAIC based on the 486DX2 processor running from 25MHz to 66Mhz. The LCU also comes with ruggedised peripherals like CD-ROM drives, printers, modems and so on. Of course it's no good having a waterproof, shock-tested computer if your printer or floppy can't hack the outdoor life. The LCUs, like all PCs are multi-purpose and the processors have been used as tactical communications stations for armoured and air defence units. By putting such immense processing power at the front line, soldiers in Bradley-tracked armoured fighting vehicles can see the whole battlefield picture. All of the information from aircraft and other vehicles watching the battlefield can show them what is happening.

Performance

One of the latest versions of the LCU family, the V1A1 is essentially a Compaq LTE notebook. What the military has found is that the reliability of commercial computers is in many cases superior to specially developed military hardware. In the early 80s, as business users became more demanding, computer manufacturers simply had to make reliable products to stay in business. And, although a little slow off the mark, the military now takes commercial product very seriously as it tries to find a compromise between cost and performance.

Actually the 80x86 PCs are generally in a minority in military use. RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) devices are more

Training Grounds

Here's a look at a typical attack training mission for a fast jet pilot using a PC. The pilot can take his PC with its mission planning software loaded and input the target location and type. He may then go to his intelligence centre and download the position of known units, including enemy air defence missiles, guns, and radars. With this information, and more, he can upload it into his aircraft and fly the pre-programmed routes through the battlefield.

Planning the route: Mission planning is a natural role for military PCs. ►



common, simply because of processing requirements. They still have a place though and simplicity and standardisation are strong selling points for the PC, as well as its backwards chip compatibility and the steady growth in performance. Working a digital map would look OK on a 286 for example, but you could do a hell of a lot more with a Pentium and a splotch of colour everywhere.

Commercial laptops for the military are more common now — administration is one of the most regular jobs for the military. AST for example recently won a competition to supply laptops to the Royal Marines. These are quite similar to commercial devices but will also be used in the field.

Spyplanes

Simple cut-down versions of PCs may well be used in the future by soldiers as personal information and communication controllers. They will be the military equivalent of personal digital assistants and will form part of the modern warrior. Today even people are becoming known as 'systems' and that's exactly the philosophy now being used to describe the future soldier — a fighting system. Part of this mechanisation will be inbuilt night vision capability, bulletproofing, and an onboard PC, perhaps worn on a belt with a display and speakers built into the helmet. Input to the PC could either be speech driven or the user could have a wrist-mounted mouse. A commander of a small unit would then be able to distribute orders and the information

necessary to complete them to his troops without having to bring them all together.

Aside from the front-line uses, PCs have proven good tools in two major markets, simulation/training and mission planning. As for mission planning this is probably the best use of PCs yet demonstrated in the military. Basically pilots or any other warfighter have PCs loaded with all the information relevant to the mission. See the information box for an example of such a case.

Friend or foe?

Simulation and training applications are natural for the PC. While high-end high fidelity graphic visuals for flight and driving simulators are usually undertaken by RISC processors, the military has taken to the PC as a valuable and cheap way to train its soldiers. New processing capability has expanded the scope for what PCs can be used and their role is crucial in the new era of warfare. For example UK company Invertron, recently bought out by simulator giant CAE, is going to provide desktop PCs to the Army to train soldiers in battlefield identification. On the modern battlefield however you have to train soldiers to be able to identify friend and foe in any weather, day or night and with different kinds of sensors.

Invertron's training device shows the targets in normal light but also in infra-red, when vehicles can look significantly different. PC-based training can allow interaction and incorporate features like video and cross-

indexing via networking. All in all, the military is adapting fast to new learning techniques.

The use of the PC in the military environment can only expand as more and more information becomes standardised and processing power increases. Every commander's dream would be to have all of his information on the same communications network, passing data and voice communications quickly and easily. The PC is one of those inventions that beckons the imagination to find new uses and to perform new tasks.

In the ultimate test of competitive advantage — combat — there is an information revolution as explosive as that which hit all our business lives in the 80s and 90s. Getting the computer power into the hands of the soldier will add another dimension in the ever more dangerous field of warfighting.

Charles Bickers is the IT editor of Jane's Defence Weekly, the weekly magazine for the defence industry.



◀ **High end graphic visual simulations have revolutionised training in the armed forces as the price/performance ratio comes down.**

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FWith Autumn approaching, we extend our preview section to cover some of the titles which will be keeping you occupied during those long, dark evenings soon to come.

Cal Jones

THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

PC Review gives a single mark out of 10 to rate games and multimedia products. The score takes into account all the product elements such as playability, graphics and sound. We aim to test to completion — where applicable. We can be pretty tough on games and multimedia too. Five is the halfway mark so anything rated higher is above average in quality.

High Lights

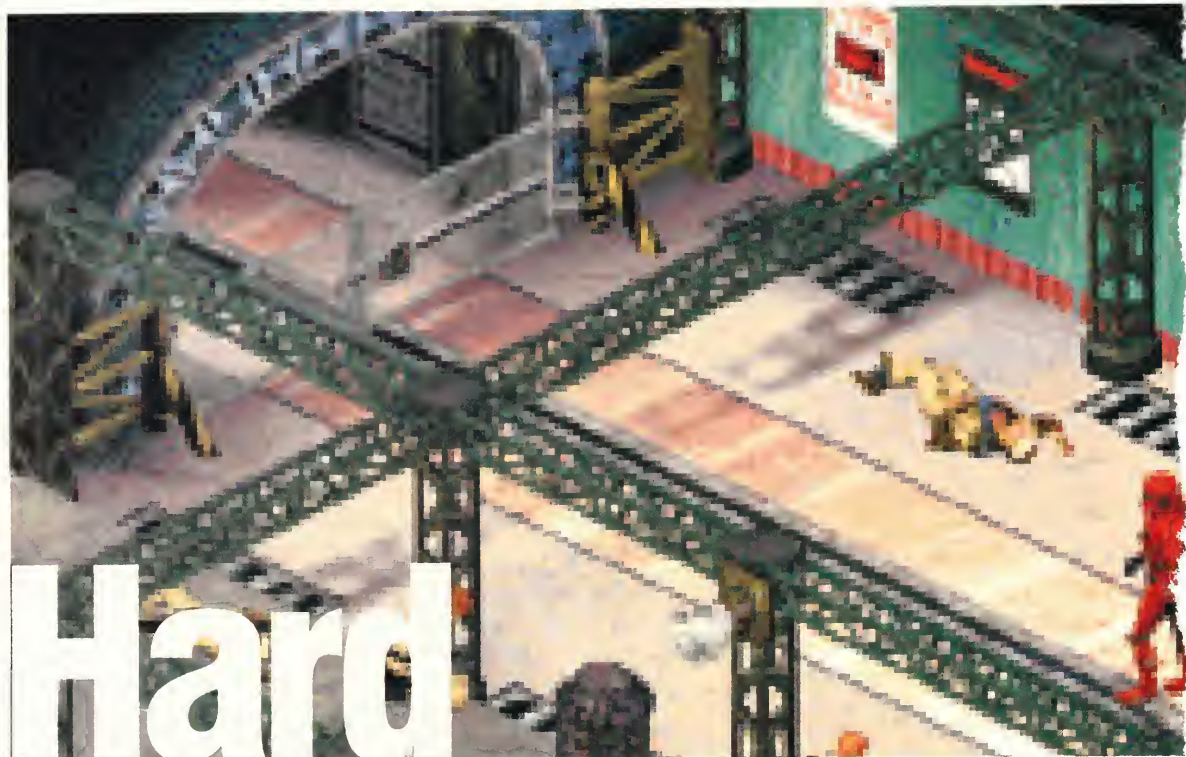


Air Power 60

Cyber Judas 64

Space Quest VI 68

Across The Rhine 82



CD ONLY
Publisher: Origin/Electronic Arts
Contact: (01753) 549442
Price: TBA
Expected release: September

Hard Boiled

Playing Crusader is like getting a shot of pure adrenaline in the arm. Cal Jones froths at the mouth over Origin's latest.

Crusader: In Progress

Oorigin is known primarily for two things: the Wing Commander series and the Ultima series. Sure, the company has produced other offerings, and some of them have been jolly good, too. But Wing Commander and Ultima are epics on such a grand scale that you can't exactly ignore them.

Being a role-playing type of gal rather than a space cadet, I'd plump for Ultima every time. Ultima VII is one of my favourite games ever, and Serpent Isle had me glued to my PC for months.

But Origin went and spoiled it all with Ultima VIII: Pagan. Pagan, you see, was not a "proper" role-playing game. It was an arcade adventure. Nothing wrong with that, you might think, but if it's not what you're expecting, you're going to be disappointed.

Origin had improved the graphics, lowering the viewpoint to give you an almost isometric view of the proceedings and adding many frames of anima-

tion to the character. The result looked extremely good. When the central character (the Avatar) got into a fight, he'd whip his sword out of his backpack in a nice, fluid motion. He could run and jump and climb, and you now had full control over him during combat rather than just clicking on the monster you wanted him to attack and then hoping for the best.

But let's face it. It wasn't really Ultima. It was an arcade game, with some role-playing bits.

Extreme violence

Crusader, Origin's latest, looks like a futuristic Ultima VIII, but it has guns instead of swords and robots instead of

goblins. It's extremely violent. More importantly, it has no pretensions about being a role-playing game at all. It's action all the way. Imagine Syndicate with one large character to control instead of four small ones and you're almost there.

You control the Enforcer, a rebel who has been sent on a series of missions to overthrow an oppressive government of the future. Armed with an array of powerful weapons, the Enforcer must think and fight his way through levels filled with hostile guards and deadly traps.

I once had a school report that described me as leaving a trail of disorganisation in my wake. The same is true of the Enforcer. ▼

The red-armoured Enforcer enjoys a brief moment of rest when he visits the bar. I hope he remembers to take his helmet off before he attempts to drink his pint. ►



Quick, shoot the jobsworth in the yellow suit before he sets off the alarm! This is the first screen in the game, and it's action from the word go. ▶



You can see the great graphics from these screenshots, but let me also tell you that the sound effects and music are fantastic as well.

Your Enforcer can walk, run, kneel, roll and jump. But more importantly, he can blow things up. ▶

Thinking, of course, is a little difficult when you're being shot at from all angles, and I have to admit that it gets very tricky at times. But it's fun.

This is one of the most exciting games I've seen, and all the more satisfying because you do damage to anything you hit. Bodies collapse in pools of blood, oil tanks explode and computer terminals go haywire. Even the office chairs manage to spin round when you hit them.

Fast paced action

All this frantic action is backed up by fantastically detailed rendered graphics and an atmospheric musical soundtrack. Origin knows a bit about adding polish to games, but Crusader has the gameplay to back it up. This is one game that will not disappoint.

Guards can shoot holes in walkways, leaving you to leap across the gap. Miss your step and you're subjected to an unpleasant fiery death. ▶

The chicken-like security robots (or APP-4400s) are rather like the ED-209s in RoboCop. Bad news, in other words. ▼



Crusader has more large explosions than Blown Away. ▶

Ouch! That's several thousand volts through the noggin. Some puzzle-solving is required. ▼



Six of the best

PC Review introduces the best games of the last three months.

FX Fighter

Philips Media

£39.99

Rated 9

Issue 46

The PC's very own Virtua Fighter beater.



Command and Conquer

Virgin £44.99

Rated 8

Issue 46

Fast-paced strategy meets stunning graphics.



Star Trek: The Next Gen — A Final Unity

MicroProse

£44.99

Rated 9

Issue 45

Ultra-slick adventure based on the cult TV series.



A IV Network\$

Infogrames

£44.99

Rated 9

Issue 45

Deep and involving train network simulation.



Full Throttle

LucasArts/
Virgin £44.99

Rated 9

Issue 44

Biker gangs unite and go on the rampage in what is LucasArts' best adventure yet.



Flight Unlimited

Virgin £44.99

Rated 9

Issue 44

Take to the skies in this hyper-realistic civilian flight sim. The feel of this flight sim is superb. For potential Johnny Flyboys everywhere.





◀ You'll find all the teams who raced in the 1994 season here, including less glamorous outfits such as Ligier.



Is Microprose king of the road? Cal Jones test-drives three new racing games that will drive you doolaly...

Racing Demons

Formula One Grand Prix: In Progress

First released in 1991, Geoff Crammond's Formula One Grand Prix set the standard by which all other racing games are now judged. Back then, its authentic feel made it an instant classic, it drove racing and non-racing fans completely wild with its great gameplay and stupendous speed.

In fact Grand Prix's incredible longevity earned it a well-deserved place in PC games Hall of Fame. And although it now looks a tad dated, it's still very popular and is currently enjoying a new lease of life as a budget title. What's remarkable however is that few games have challenged its supremacy as the top PC racing game since: Papyrus Software's IndyCar Racing and NASCAR are technically better, but their subject matter is of less relevance to European games players.

But Formula One Grand Prix's throne is

As with the original F1GP, braking and finding the best racing line is handled for you, leaving you to concentrate on your tactics. ▶

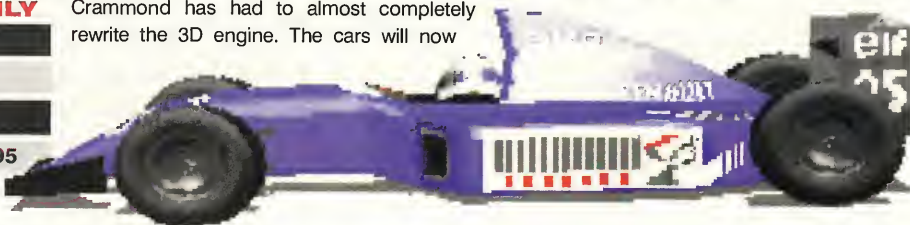
about to be usurped, and the challenger is none other than its sequel, Formula One Grand Prix 2. How, I wondered, could Geoff Crammond manage to improve on his original masterpiece? As it turns out, there have been many changes. The most obvious difference is that the graphics have been brought bang up to date. All objects are now fully texture-mapped and light-sourced, and the detail is incredible. A technique called specular reflection has been used to make shiny textures, such as the cars' bodywork, glint in the sun. Even the tracks look real: Normal Surplus, who was responsible for building the tracks, actually walked around Monaco with a video camera to film the road textures.

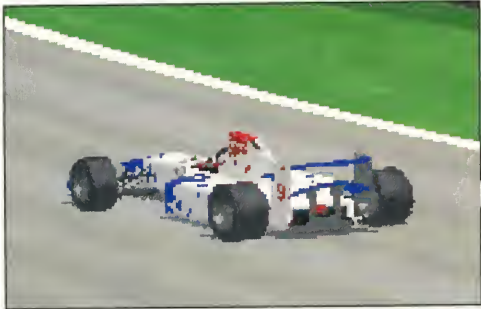
To accommodate the new graphics, Geoff Crammond has had to almost completely rewrite the 3D engine. The cars will now



▲ All the cars are reproduced as accurately as possible, from chassis to cockpit. This, if you hadn't guessed from the colour, is a Ferrari.

CD ONLY
Publisher: Microprose
Contact: (01454) 326532
Price: TBA
Expected Release: September 95





▲ A variety of viewpoints are available to you, such as this trackside perspective.

pitch and roll, and react to curbing, changes of surface and banked tracks. In addition, each car has different aerodynamics which are affected by weather, damage to the bodywork and slipstreams from other cars.

Another major difference is that, whereas F1GP didn't include any of the real drivers, F1GP2 is based accurately on the 1994 Grand Prix season. All 16 tracks are reproduced in glorious detail, every car is reproduced as realistically as possible — right down to the cockpit — and even the drivers, who include Hill and Schumacher, amongst others, have their own different personalities. The artificial intelligence determines how each driver will react. Some drive more aggressively than others, some tend to be impatient and a few are more likely to use dirty tricks whenever they can get away with it.

More levels, more hazards, more . . .

And there's more... F1GP2 has an impressive array of features. There are five difficulty levels, and the harder levels offer such hazards as engine failure and sand traps to slow you down. You can opt for a quick race, and individual Grand Prix or, if you have the endurance, an entire season. And you can save your best (or worst) laps to disk so that you can watch them from a variety of camera angles using the replay feature. On top of all that, there's a head-to-head mode for when you'd rather take on a human opponent. Comprehensive is probably the most accurate way to describe this game.

It doesn't stop there, however. Constant changes in the teams, cars and rules means that there's almost endless scope for add-on disks in the future. Beyond that, Geoff Crammond is keeping his options open as to what his next game will be. According to F1GP2 producer Stephen Hand, Crammond is toying with the idea of using the new game engine as a basis for a new version of his 1988 game, Stunt Car Racer. But until then, I'm sure that racing sim fans will be more than content with F1GP2.

Continued overleaf ►



◀ Even the advertising hoardings have been lovingly recreated.



▲ At speeds of more than 200mph, a Formula One car can be a bit of a handful.

◀ The cars will react realistically to any surface changes, including kerbing.



▲ The tracks are as authentic as Geoff Crammond and the rest of the F1GP2 team could make them. Apparently, Formula One drivers who have played the game say that they're just like the real thing.

Grand Prix Manager: In Progress

Slipping behind the wheel of a Formula One car is one thing, but how about managing an entire team? Budding Frank Williams will be able to do just that when MicroProse releases Grand Prix Manager in November. This new strategy game covers every aspect of running a team, including hiring or poaching drivers, giving them orders for race tactics, raising sponsorship and car design. The quick start option allows you to buy an existing team, but you can also build one up from scratch.

Running under Windows, Grand Prix Manager features SVGA graphics, some of which are based on photos from AutoSport magazine. There are dramatic cut-scenes from the races themselves, and accurate team and driver information. Look for more details on Grand Prix Manager in a forthcoming issue.



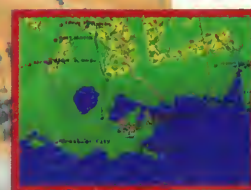
All the teams who raced in the 1994 season are represented. ▼



20,000 DEAD ON THE BATTLEFIELD...
ENEMY GUNS RIPPING INTO YOUR FLANK...
CAVALRY ADVANCING TOWARDS YOUR CAPITAL...

DECIDING THE FATE OF A NATION WAS NEVER GOING TO BE EASY

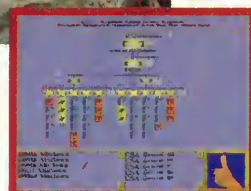
The Civil War



BUILD-
RECRUIT ARMIES, BUILD FLEETS, SET UP BLOCKADES, IMPROVE RAILWAYS AND CONSTRUCT FORTIFICATIONS.



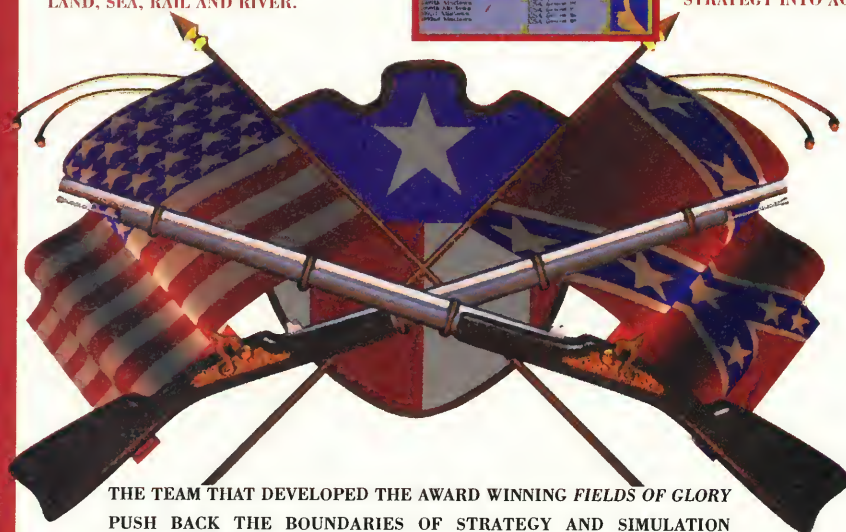
DATABASE-
ACCESS TO ALL THE INFORMATION YOU WILL EVER NEED, GENERALS, WEAPONS AND WHAT REALLY HAPPENED.



COMMAND-
APPOINT, PROMOTE AND DISMISS HISTORICAL GENERALS. DECIDE ARMY STRENGTHS AND FORMATIONS, PUT YOUR STRATEGY INTO ACTION.



MANOEUVRE-
USE THE DETAILED CAMPAIGN MAP OF THE USA TO MOVE YOUR ARMIES BY LAND, SEA, RAIL AND RIVER.



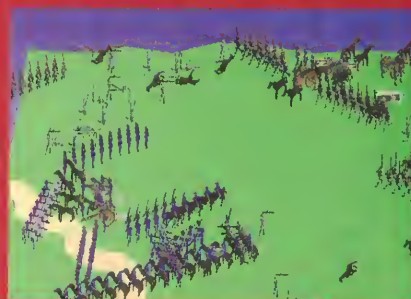
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► Looks real, doesn't it? But I don't see anyone taking any notice of the 'Stop' signs on the road. ►



There are different types of karts to choose from, and you can modify these as you wish using the action replay feature. The game itself drives like a dream. Anyone who's ever driven a go-kart will know the sensation of speed you get.



▲ Like F1GP2, Karts has a replay facility, allowing you to view your fastest laps and most spectacular crashes from a variety of angles.

If jumping in at the deep end with Formula One seems a bit too daunting, you could always break yourself in gently with a spot of go-karting. Karting may lack the glamour of Formula One, but it's fast, fun and furious, and MicroProse has attempted to capture the spirit of this hectic and competitive sport with Virtual Karts.

Up until now there have been few karting sims on the PC. The most recent, Manic Media's SuperKarts (rated 8, Issue 44), was more of an arcade game with its cartoon-style graphics and simple control system. Virtual Karts, however, is an out-and-out racing sim.

The first thing which strikes you about Virtual Karts is that it looks ultra-slick, thanks to its high resolution, texture-mapped graphics. The road circuits used in the game were actually filmed from a car and the footage was

▲ Nice road, nice sky, nice buildings... And even some nice fluffy hay bales to soften the blow when you lose your racing line.

Virtual Karts: In Progress

Don't forget to lean hard into those corners if you want to avoid a crash... ►

used as the basis for the graphics, giving Virtual Karts an extremely realistic look. You can even view the action from any angle using the action replay feature.

The game itself drives like a dream. Anyone who's ever driven a go-kart will know the sensation of speed you get when you're that close to the ground, and Virtual Karts captures that perfectly. The karts skid and corner as they should, and there's all the bumping and barging you'd associate with the sport (though none of the bruising, fortunately). Choosing from the three options, practice, single race or go-kart Grand Prix championship, you'll be able to modify your kart's tires, chassis and motor, and there's also a network option so that you can take on your friends.

The whole thing is enhanced by digital sound which brings home the atmosphere of a go-kart race. Virtual Karts is due for release in October, and could be just the thing to help you use up all that pent-up aggression — especially if you've just blown your championship hopes in Formula One Grand Prix 2!



CD ONLY
Publisher: Microprose
Contact: (01454) 326532
Price: TBA
Expected Release: October 95

And this is how you'll see the race. I hope the guy in front doesn't brake too hard or it's shunt-time for me. ►



▲ Why is that all the go-karters in this game wear have to wear such larey outfits?

Take aim, fire

**CD ONLY****Publisher:** Mindscape**Contact:** (01444) 246333**Price:** TBA**Expected release:** October 1995

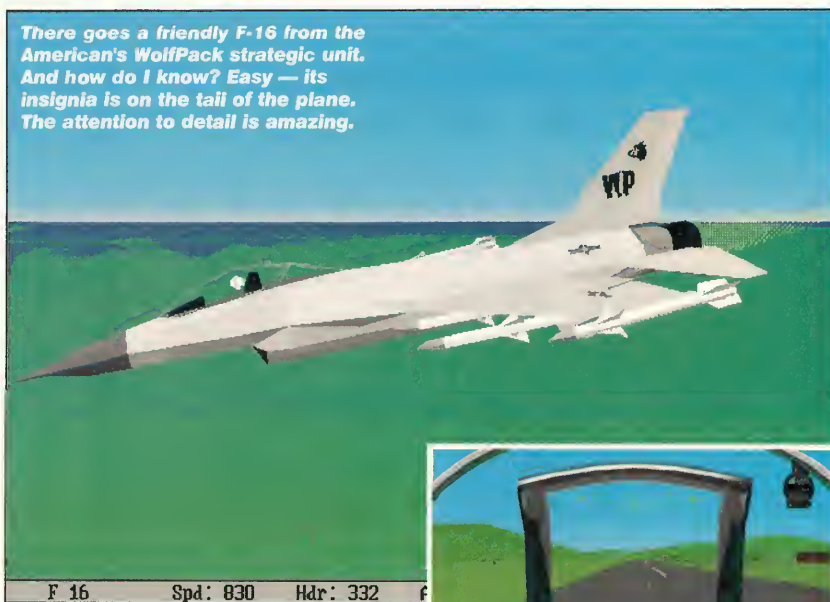
It's a sim, a pure sim, and nothing but a sim. But as Martin Klimes finds out, SU-27 looks armed to high heaven...

Even as MicroProse's flight game Top Gun prepares to blow away all rivals this summer, Mindscape is planning a little shock for the competition. SU-27, a simulation of Russia's most stunning fighter jet, promises to mix hyper-realism with hyper-playability, and will perform on any machine from a 386 to a top-end Pentium.

Initially, SU-27 looks very similar to hardcore sims such as the now obsolete Tornado, spurning lovely texture-mapped graphics for simple polygons. On high-end machines the resolution can be pumped up to SVGA and, as some objects are made up of hundreds of individual polygons, the effect is pretty stunning. On ships, for example, each radar dish and gun turret moves and tracks you individually, and you can see flaps and afterburners on your own plane reacting to your controls.

The game is made realistic by the flight model, which has been put together by the pilots and designers of the original plane. But that doesn't make it harder to fly, just better all round. Another plus is the enemy intelligence, which is also a big improvement over most other sim games. Using 'Electric Jet' technology from professional military sims, dogfighting

There goes a friendly F-16 from the American's WolfPack strategic unit. And how do I know? Easy — its insignia is on the tail of the plane. The attention to detail is amazing.



And introducing the SU-27 Flanker, as seen from inside the cockpit. Yes, all the gauges are in double dutch (well, Russian at any rate), but fortunately the manual tells you where everything you need is located.



your opponents is more like battling against real people, although if this isn't challenging enough you can always link up to eight players together in a network game.

Didn't they have a war here once?

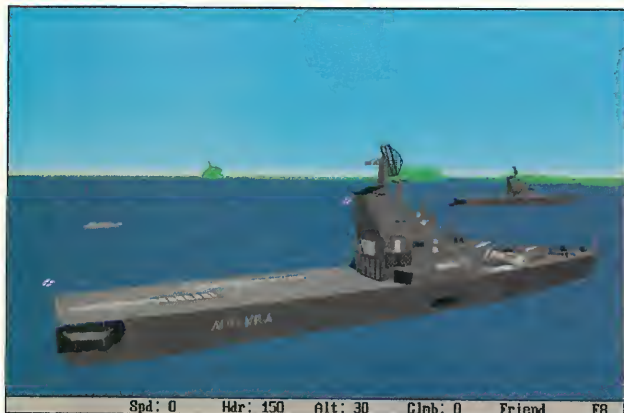
But why are you flying a Russian jet? Well, the idea behind the game is that you are caught up in a war in the Crimea between the Ukraine and Russia, clashing over their common border (sadly, a scenario which is not so unlikely these days). You choose exactly what role to play, but the campaign is incredibly flexible — you can be everything from 'just' a pilot following mission orders, to the commander in chief who's in charge of the whole shooting match

(including tanks, ships and all other available resources). The campaign plays practically as well as any dedicated strategy game, but is still very simple to get into.

If you don't have time for all that, standalone missions are included for a quick flying fix. The game promises ground targets aplenty and skies full of planes, each out to fulfil its own mission. And as well as the option of taking a wingman, if you finish the campaign you can create your own using the scenario editor.

Although SU-27 Flanker will be fully compatible with Windows 95, the game runs equally fast under good old fashioned MS-DOS. No matter whether your machine is a monster Pentium or a mousy 386, this is definitely one take-off we're eagerly awaiting.

The detail is incredible. Just look at the ships — fly too close to the turrets and you'll get a nasty shock as they turn round to face you and knock you out of the sky.



▲ An enemy radar plane takes off to cause mayhem in my neck of the woods. Fortunately for me however, I've gone and organised flak and missiles to be fired his way, which is happening already by the looks of things.

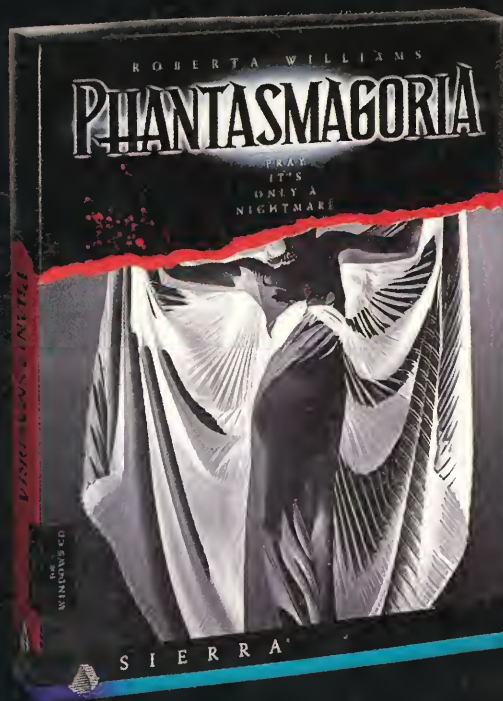


▲ This geezer's sitting right next to the bridge I want to hit, looking mean and broody. And well he might. You'll soon find out that every enemy in this game can kill you faster than you can say, "Pass the vodka, comrade".

*I feel its presence, icy fingers upon my throat.
I hear its eerie sounds, unsettling my every thought.
I try in vain to slumber, my reveries gripped by violent spasms of terror.
My only salvation, the shock of awakening.
Something is very, very wrong here.*

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Publisher: Interplay

Contact: 01235 821666

Price: TBA

Expected Release: Oct/Nov 1995

Stonekeep: In Progress

It's seen technological triumphs and logistical hiccups, but — finally — Stonekeep will hit the streets this autumn... Christina Erskine charts the rise of a single idea and a massive game.

Way back in the heady days of 1984, the twenty something president of Interplay, Brian Fargo, charged his strapping company with the idea of a full-screen role-playing game. A game that would be played peering into the dungeon from your own viewpoint and without a morass of extraneous detail and statistics. This was at a time when Interplay's own Bard's Tale, with a mere quarter screen given over to scratchy graphics, was considered cutting edge. Alas the technology simply wasn't available to create an entire game in this way, so the idea was dropped — but not forgotten.

Stonekeep was destined to be made for CD, and by autumn 1993, Interplay had big plans for an enhanced CD-ROM version, and a CD-only sequel. By Christmas, it was already looking like taking up 11 floppy disks, so the deci-



sion to deliver on a single CD was an easy one to take, and the version of Stonekeep which will be released this autumn will effectively be both episodes, one and two, turned into one big original game.

Producer Michael Quarles faced up to the

◀ **Sometimes you'll find puzzles like this runic one hidden in the dungeon walls. Your on-screen cursor will change when it passes over an active area that merits further examination.**

HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER HIT



Compare and contrast: the shadow king was originally a digitised actor...



...now he's a fully rendered, computer-generated character in the game.



Michael Quarles (in the stripey shirt) directs one monster in his soft shoe shuffle against a blue screen background.



Quarles and colleague watch the results of the day's work. All digitisation was later redone indoors in Hollywood studios.



▲ The skull door leads to the purple energy vortex. If anybody knows what purple energy is please let me know.



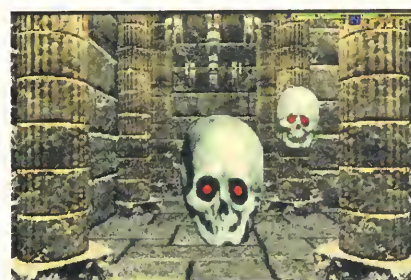
▲ Not all the dungeons look exactly the same: this screen shot is taken from the level of the ice realm.



▲ This dwarf blocks the way to the spear gate. Go on you can have him, I mean he's only a wee one.



▲ In the cave of the Ice Queen. I bet she's a bit chilly in her Baywatch outfit, best suited to the beach methinks.



▲ Negotiate the floating skulls before you can progress any further...



▲ This is a Throg four-arm statue: so how are you going to get past him?

fact that they would have to ramp up the production values. Characters were being shot against a blue-painted cloth in the Interplay corridors, or even out of doors at the mercy of shifting light; a skeleton was purloined from a medical school and its bones strapped around an "actor's" torso; the whole she-bang was being put together on 9mm film. If Stonekeep was to stand up graphically to the competition Interplay would have to do things differently.

Frustrating

The many delays have obviously been frustrating but Brian Fargo is philosophical about them. "It's been so long in development now that the pressure is on to deliver something really special. If something is slightly off, by half a frame, or a voiceover isn't quite right, we change it. We might as well, really, since it's been so long anyway."

In the final version, you'll find that about half the monsters are still realised as digitised video including the skeleton, doughty survivor from the original Stonekeep and half are now rendered creations, using Alias on Silicon Graphics machines. Look out for the giant ant which appears in Stonekeep; if it seems familiar, it may be because it has been modelled from the central character in SimAnt!

Likewise, voiceovers couldn't be left to the inexperienced. More than 35 voice actors were

signed up for the speaking parts, all of them Hollywood professionals who would expect to spend their days recording TV commercials. As a finishing touch, native actors were chosen for the separate voices needed for the French and German versions. There's even a localised Japanese version in the works.

Some things haven't been changed, revised, or rewritten. The dungeons themselves are still the same 1993 design, and the pattern of movement (one step forward, one step back, one left, one right) is still the same, which has led to criticism that the drive for real-life look and feel falls over as soon as you start moving because you can't go off at an angle or look up and down. Fargo maintains the decision regarding players' movement in the game was taken fairly early on, and does not detract from the game. "It feels right and it doesn't feel as though it's not state-of-the-art. OK, so you can't look up and down and have complete freedom of movement, but that's a trade-off. We said it wasn't worth losing the great stuff we've done with the monsters just for the benefit of the player being able to look up and down."

Also the plot hasn't changed since the original idea, but we'll go into the expansive fantasy adventure storyline and some of the game-playing elements in next month's further, exclusive look at the game.

PRETENDERS TO THE THRONE



With Stonekeep spending so long in its own development dungeon, other publishers have had the chance to pick up the idea and bring out their own similarly structured titles. So what of the competition that Stonekeep will now face on release?

Forgotten Castle

Forgotten completely. Twin Dolphin Games made a big splash at the same Summer CES as Stonekeep, with dungeons that looked as though they had been created during an acid trip. Since then, silence. Never made it off the starting blocks.

Elder Scrolls: Arena

A lot of people laughed when Bethesda, the creator of Wayne Gretzky Hockey, announced it would try its hand at a role-playing game. They laughed on the other side of their faces when it produced the highly respectable Elder Scrolls, although the long-promised sequel, Daggerfall, is proving reluctant to leave the drawing board. Rated 8, Issue 31

System Shock

Role-playing purists may argue that this hardly deserves to be part of the genre, particularly as you can choose your own combat, puzzle and missions settings. But it scores highly for atmosphere and scope of play. Rated 7, Issue 37



▲ The Faerie Queen casting a spell.

NEXT MONTH

Next month we'll look at the game-play in Stonekeep and how the different elements of the game have been brought together.



Salivating



Peas and pod, DID and flight sims. Rik Henderson takes to the skies in a shiny, new EF2000.



CD ONLY

Publisher: DID/Ocean

Contact: (01925) 242425

Price: TBA

Expected release: October 1995

TFX: EF2000: In progress

If you're a flight sim nut and your idea of a good time is a perfectly executed Immelmann, a doorstep-sized manual and the phrase "Mach 2", then the next few months will have you dribbling uncontrollably with delight. If you fancy taking to the skies in an attack helicopter, then why not take DI's Apache Gunship for a spin. If you feel the need, the need for speed, then Spectrum Holobyte's Top Gun could be the game that will blow your socks off. On the other hand, if you demand hyper-realism, authentic avionics, SVGA graphics, an eight-player network mode and a game that models the new Euro Fighter 2000 (EF2000), then the aptly named TFX: EF2000 could well be the game to invest your spondulies in.

But although the flight model has been developed in collaboration with British Aerospace and the Royal Aeronautical Society to make the simulation as accurate as possible, a big part of the game's attraction is down to the spectacular terrain graphics. Using a state-of-the-art 3D polygon engine, four million square miles of Northern Europe has been realistically modelled as you battle a Russian force that has invaded Scandinavia, swooping

▲ Ah, the Tornado. Did I say it was a crap plane? No, of course not. It's a vital part of the overall strategy in any major military offensive. Yes. Great plane really. A bit boring to fly, steers like a drunken cow, but a lovely aircraft.

down through chiselled valleys, thundering at 400 feet across lakes and soaring above the cloud layer in one of the most advanced aircraft ever designed.

Sod the Tornado then...

And if you're lucky enough to have access to a network, EF2000 boasts multi-player support for up to eight players, mind you there's nothing wrong with flying solo. If you're playing on your own, the game features intelligent wing-

▲ EF2000 can be played in either bog-standard VGA mode or super-smooth, 640x480 SVGA, but you'll need a monster machine if you want have jerk-free gameplay. Better start saving for that 120MHz Pentium.

men, combat air patrols, surgical ground strikes and a complex battlefield generation program that ensures that no campaign is ever the same.

Of course, EF2000 will require a machine with a fair bit of processing oomph and even in lowly VGA mode, DID won't be recommending anything less than a DX2 66MHz 486 PC. The game will be released in late October where it could go head-to-head with Spectrum Holobyte's equally impressive Falcon 4. Start placing your bets now...



A lone EFA swoops low over the valleys of northern Sweden. DID's new 3D engine allows a much greater level of detail with all of the polygons now texture-mapped and shaded.



▲ DID has caused such a stir in the aircraft industry that the MoD has asked the developers to work on a low-cost simulator to train RAF fighter pilots.



The cockpit is realistically detailed.



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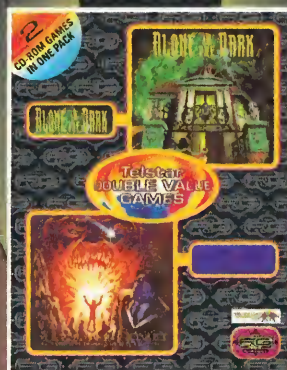


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The worrying thing about any human character you meet in the game is that they might not be human after all. Some people have an upsetting habit of turning into Morphs when you least expect it.

Hart-Attack

Conrad Hart returns to take on the aliens in the sequel to Flashback. Cal Jones joins him.

Fade to Black: In progress

▼ **Morphs are very, very nasty to deal with. If they end up this close to you, you may as well put your feet up and enjoy the rendered death sequence.**

What's this? An action game about Tony Hart and Morph? An adrenaline-inducing blast fest starring the presenter of a 1970s art programme on children's television and his animated plasticine pal? Er, no, actually. *Fade to Black* is about dashing hero Conrad Hart and his battle against the Morphs, a race of fierce, shape-shifting aliens who are trying to take over the galaxy. Any confusion between Conrad and our Tony is purely coincidental: since Delphine is a French company, it's highly unlikely that any of its employees were subjected to *Take Hart* during their formative years. But the Hart-Morph connection kind of amused me anyhow. And so on...

Conrad Hart, as it happens, is no stranger to the PC screen. He first aired his

acrobatic talents in Delphine's *Flashback*, a platform game that was released by US Gold back in 1993 to critical acclaim and which is now riding high in the budget charts.

Back in a flash

Flashback's success was partly due to its fast-paced gameplay, a mixture of combat and puzzle solving, and partly because it looked so darned good. Conrad ran, jumped and dangled with the grace of a gymnast. Unlike characters in the majority of arcade games, his movements were fluid and lifelike. The animation technique Delphine used to achieve this was called Rotoscoping, which made use of video footage to give the characters that extra touch of realism. At the time it was extremely innovative, and the same technique has resurfaced in many other games.

But Delphine has moved on since then.

Conrad's next outing, *Fade to Black*, is a 3D action-adventure which is more akin to games like *Alone in the Dark* and *Ecstatica* than it is to the 2D *Flashback*. The balance of puzzle-solving and good, old-fashioned fighting remains much the same, and Conrad moves as beautifully as ever. However, because Rotoscoping is less than ideal for animating 3D characters, Delphine has switched to motion capture to bring Conrad and the alien Morphs to life.

Motion capture (which was covered in PC Review Issue 45) is a relatively new technology, and has so far been seen in only a handful of games including Origin's superb *Bioforce* and Infogrames' *Prisoner of Ice*. Instead of basing the animations on video footage, actors have a number of ultra-sensitive reflectors attached to their bodies and are then filmed going through a range of motions. Their movements are then recorded onto PC, where



CD ONLY

Publisher: Delphine/EA

Contact: (01753) 549442

Price: TBA

Expected release: September 1995

they are used to give life to the polygon-based characters. It may sound a lot of trouble, but the result is highly impressive, let me tell you.

Fade to Black's storyline follows on almost directly from Flashback. The game begins in 2190 AD, with the solar system under the control of the Morphs. These aliens are strange creatures which lack a mind of their own, and are instead controlled by gigantic brains who live within colonised planets. Their shape-shifting abilities allow them to imitate any lifeform, including humans, which makes it difficult for people to trust each other in case one of them just happens to be an alien in disguise.

At the end of Flashback, Conrad escaped the planet on which he had been marooned in a spacecraft. As he drifts through space he is captured by a Morph ship and is imprisoned in a penitentiary based on the moon. There he meets fellow-prisoner John O'Connors (a Terminator reference if ever I heard one) and the pair manage to escape in order to lead the resistance and overthrow the evil Morphs.

The game itself is really quite stupendous. A series of "virtual" cameras follow Conrad as you move him around, giving the game a decidedly cinematic feel. And whenever an enemy appears, the music changes to let you



◀ **John O'Connors is the leader of the human resistance. You can tell he's a rebel from the silly beard and round glasses — but can you trust him?**

know that danger is on the horizon and you can then switch to combat mode. When you are engaged in a battle, a "radar" circle appears on screen so that you know exactly where the Morphs are lurking. It is then up to you to gun them down — or to die trying.

Action stations

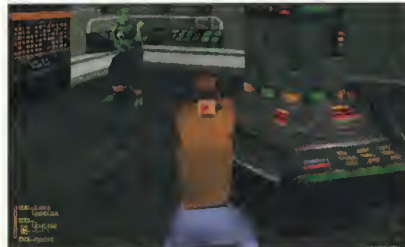
The action is fast and challenging — this game is no pushover. But it is also highly atmospheric. When Morphs move around, they transform into sticky balls of gunk which you can hear squelching along the walls and

floors long before they appear. The effect is genuinely creepy. Once they spot you, they'll morph into seven-foot tall lizard monsters — a truly scary experience if you're not prepared for it. Fade to Black is the first game to actually make me jump since Doom.

Delphine is planning to release Fade to Black in September, and with any luck we'll be able to bring you a full review next issue. When I saw it, it was almost finished, and I couldn't help but be impressed. A few more tweaks and a little extra polish and I guarantee that it'll blow you away. Awesome stuff.



▲ **Conrad isn't just restricted to moving around on his feet. He can also hop into any vehicle and fly or drive it around.**



▲ **Combat is tricky to get the hang of. Just fire at anything large and hostile and hope it dies before it gets closer.**



▲ **Conrad moves like a dream no matter what angle you see him from. He's obviously been working out recently.**



▲ **An electrical shield will absorb most of the blows the Morphs throw at you, and it could be a game in 'Gladiators'.**



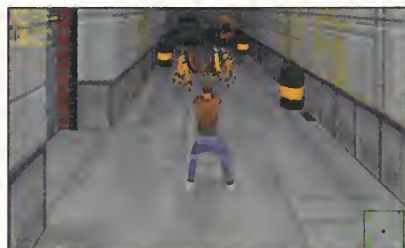
▲ **What a time to turn up! Conrad arrives on the scene just as the Morphs start to battle it out with the resistance.**



▲ **It's big, it's bad and it's coming atcha. Blast its metal head off before it turns you into offal.**



▲ **"Look guys, I don't care if you took Tony Hart from 'Vision On' and made him a star!"**



▲ **Morphs aren't the only danger. You also have to watch out for robots, particularly this mean-looking spider thing.**



▲ **The graphics are based on texture-mapped polygons, and very nice they look too.**

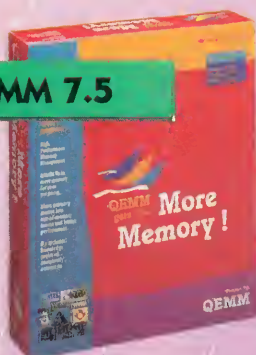
▼ **There are a few wonderful vehicles for Conrad to fiddle about with. I just hope he's up to date with his insurance.**



POWER UP!

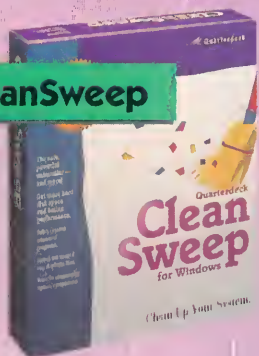
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Minimum Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major soundcards.

The PC seems to have simulated everything. I've flown Spads and Fokker Triplanes in World War One, Spitfires and P-38 Lightnings in World War Two, most F-numbered jets, a few MiGs, some civilian aircraft (the Cessna, the A300 Airbus, and more) and even an Arabian gentlemen on a magic rug. Hyper-realism has been the buzzword; stall-speeds have been painstakingly enforced, machine guns jam at crucial moments and high-tech designators drop Laser Guided Bombs through French windows. The sim business is a serious one and if you're not prepared to wade through the 300 page manual and take the time to master the basics, you're going to last about as long as an explorer who has wandered into a village of cannibals complaining that he's a bit peckish.

But unlike the top-end sims, *Air Power* isn't a game that swamps you with thrust ratios or historically accurate flight models. It's a very forgiving flight sim (you might even call it a flight game) interwoven with a strategy game. In terms of controls and feel, it's a lot like *Dawn Patrol*, but rather than being a playground for creaky, canvas-covered planes and slow-moving combat, *Air Power* has fantastical, multicoloured aircraft dropping down from Goodyear Blimps to attack texture-mapped airbases and ammo dumps. It's fast, entertaining and quite unlike anything that I've ever played before.

But it looks like Dawn Patrol

Admittedly, *Air Power* looks a lot like every other Rowan game. Like *Overlord* and *Dawn Patrol*, it uses a similar 3D engine and this means that there's the obligatory (and very sexy-looking) SVGA mode, tons of external views, a padlock view and some gorgeous tex-

ture-mapped aircraft. But where *Overlord* was a mission-based game and *Dawn Patrol* proclaimed itself as an interactive book, the 'expansionist wargame' structure of *Air Power* is similar to Origin's *Wing Commander Armada*. Rather than a fly a string of predetermined single missions, *Air Power* puts you in command of a fleet of wacky-looking planes and sausage-shaped balloons. Starting in control of a town in one corner of the map, the aim of the game is to travel around, gaining control of all the other towns until you have become powerful enough to claim the pointy hat and purple cloak of Emperordom.

It's not an easy task. Three computer opponents, each with their own brightly-patterned fleet, are trying to grab the crown for themselves and as the neutral towns are greedily swallowed by the four powers, the game soon becomes an epic battle that features desperate ground strikes, Zeppelin attacks, gunship diplomacy and huge dogfights with dozens of planes. This campaign is the real meat of the game (although there are instant action options that cut out the strategy and take you straight to the flying bits) and when you've travelled to a suitable target town on the map you can seize control in two main ways.

The first of these is through diplomatic channels. When you arrive at a non-aligned settlement, you can elect to send your diplomat down to try and persuade the people to join you. The mayor will then ask you a number of questions like "What do you think of my leadership?" and "How would you improve the quality of life in our town?" and by using a mixture of intelligence reports and stab-in-the-dark luck, you have to choose a suitable response

The crew can get a little touchy and your performance in battle can affect your fleet's overall morale. Obviously they aren't too happy if you take potshots at civilians.

wer



Like most modern flight sims, Air Power features a number of nifty external views, allowing you to view your aeroplane from any angle, zoom in and out and take a peek at enemy aircraft and ground targets.

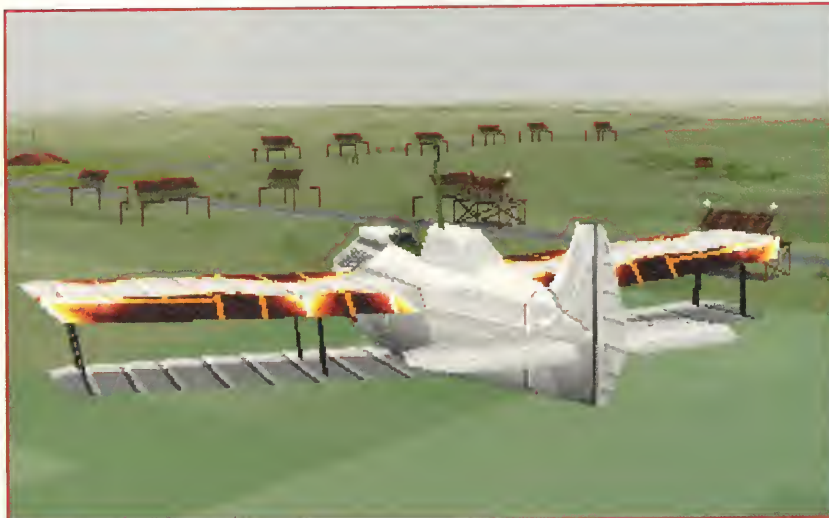


Do you remember that episode in Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade where Sean Connery and Harrison Ford escape the German airship by climbing into a plane strapped to its underbelly? You don't? Oh, never mind.



The best thing about Air Power is the fact that dogfights can have over ten planes in them and swarming around an enemy fleet, dodging AA fire and trying to shoot down the enemy really gets the adrenaline pumping.

There are eight planes in *Air Power* but only two real plane types: the light fighter and the heavy fighter. Both of these are available in a variety of colours and in VGA or SVGA flavours. ▶



from the five or six multiple choice answers on offer. Your answers to these questions then dictate whether or not the town will support you wholeheartedly or try to disembowel you in public with a grapefruit spoon.

I love you Dukey

Diplomacy in *Air Power* is a bit like canvassing for a general election, but unlike European politics, if you can't win the voter over with a few choice words, a firm handshake and a promise of tax cuts, you can sleep safe with the knowledge that you can just blow the ungrateful bastards up and force them into servitude. Simply send down a squadron of heavily armed planes and the odd airship laden with 1,000 pound bombs and you'll soon have even the most ardent anarchist waving "I love you Dukey" flags and minting

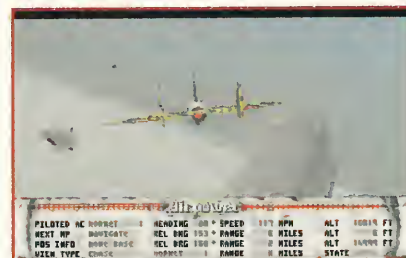
commemorative coins in your honour.

Obviously, this is the cue for the 3D polygon action and there are two main ways that you can force a town or city into submission: siege or suppression. Siege, as its name suggests, starts a war of attrition against a target, allowing you to select and strike soft military and civilian targets (ie bridges and rail yards) to show the inhabitants of your town that you're not a Duke to be messed with. Suppression also involves air strikes on military and civilian targets and although it offers a quicker route to the city's surrender, it's a much more dangerous one as the installations you eventually attack (ie communications bunkers, airbases, HQ buildings and so on) tend to be surrounded by streams of endless anti-aircraft fire and swarms and swarms of enemy aircraft.



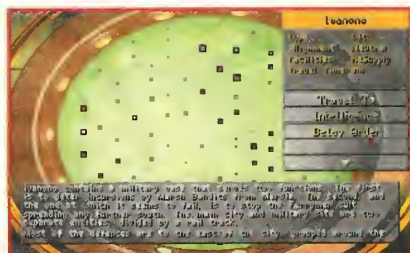
▲ *Air Power* neatly combines frantic air-to-air action with more tactical hit-and-run ground strikes.

There are eight different planes in *Air Power*, but there only two major plane types — the light and the heavy fighter. The light fighter, which is typically used for escort duties, fleet defence and strafing missions, is armed with a machine gun and eight unguided rockets, while the heavy fighter, which also packs a machine gun, carries bombs instead of rockets but possesses the aerodynamic agility of a condor in a shoebox. Obviously, Rowan has taken a bit of creative license with the air-



▲ Some missions in *Air Power* involve shooting down the enemy airships. This cargo carrier thought it could hide in the cloud layer. I don't think so.

UP, UP AND AWAY IN MY BEAUTIFUL BALLOON...



▲ In the campaign mode, you must first pick a suitable target (here the town of Ivanono which has resupply facilities), check your intelligence reports and then order the fleet to fly to it.



▲ It's always a good idea to try the diplomatic approach. Let's be blunt here — he's a terrible leader, I've got a fleet of balloons and all Ivanono has to defend itself is two pistols...



▲ My diplomatic overtures were rejected, so I'll show them I mean business. Having targeted their communications building, the reconnaissance footage shows me what it looks like.



▲ Luckily the enemy aircraft are no match for (a) my superior flying skills and (b) the fact that I've tweaked the game options to give myself unlimited ammo. Dacka, dacka, dacka...



▲ From now on in it's a breeze. I come in low over the single AA battery and let loose my rockets at the bunker which explodes with a rather loud and satisfying kaboom noise.



▲ Then it's back to the mother balloon, dodging the enemy fighters and pressing TAB to speed the game time up. I don't stand a chance of hooking up manually mind, so I press Autopilot.

craft design, producing a collection of planes that are a weird mix of World War One airships and sleek prop-powered fighters. There's also a mix of technologies too — your planes don't have any radar, but you can press the 'A' key to activate "Ye Olde Autopilot" mode.

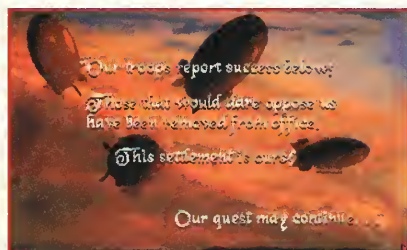
Oops, my wings have fallen off

As I mentioned earlier, the actual flight dynamics of the aircraft aren't frighteningly realistic and as a result the planes are very forgiving. In fact, you can throw them around the sky with wild abandon without worrying that your wings will snap off or your pilot will black out at a crucial moment. As the planes have no radar, like Dawn Patrol and Overlord the combat is close-up, propeller to rudder stuff and although Air Power doesn't have a virtual cockpit, it features an internal and external combat lock that allows you to locate the nearest target easily.

But even with the neat-looking SVGA mode, Air Power isn't exactly a glamour game. I still find the Rowan engine a bit fiddly and it doesn't generate the same sort of excitement as something like Top Gun or TFX: EF2000. The 3D bits are all very nice, but you could accuse Rowan of blatant unoriginality as all the programmers seem to have done is to change the planes a bit and remodel the flight characteristics. Well, yes fair point. But what Rowan is trying to do is to create similar looking games with very different styles. Overlord, for example, was a straightforward mission-based flight sim, Dawn Patrol resembled a multimedia book, while MicroProse's forthcoming Navy Strike is a strategy and resource management affair.



▲ It's an easy target so I've plumped for a light fighter which carries a machine gun and eight rockets. Using the external lock, I discover that I'm being pursued by enemy fighters.



▲ The mission is a success. The town has backed down in the face of military might and they have decided to join me. The campaign continues...

WHO THE HELL IS ROWAN SOFTWARE?

A recent history...

Overlord

With Gouraud-shaded, texture-mapped graphics, Overlord was one of the first PC flight sims to venture into the uncharted terrors of SVGA graphics. Based at an airbase in rural England, Overlord sent you over the Channel to battle the might of the Nazis. Succeed and you halt the German invasion, fail and you end up wearing short leather trousers and eating bratwurst.

Dawn Patrol

Basically, Dawn Patrol is Overlord with slower planes. Designed as an interactive history book, you can read about the great aces of the First World War, like Boelke and Von Richtofen, look at digitised pictures of their aircraft before taking to the polygon skies to recreate the battles they fought in. A nice idea, but lacked an attention-holding campaign option.

But what really turns you on to Air Power is the fact that the 3D engine allows lots of planes to be in the sky at once; the thrill of a 10 plane dogfight, as you dive, loop and weave between the dirigibles that make up your fleet is quite unbelievable. The flight sim market is a very crowded one and what Air Power has done is to take the typical flight sim fundamentals and give them a bit of a twist. On a very basic level, it's just another carrier-based flight sim, but I like the idea of chugging across the sky in a fleet of huge Zeppelins and the wacky aircraft, the wargame strategy and the Prisoner Of Zenda-style uniforms create a unique atmosphere.

I've got a few gripes, namely that even on fast Pentium machines, you still don't get jerk-free gameplay in SVGA mode and I still hate the way that the aircraft cockpits take up half the screen (it makes combat difficult and bombing more a case of luck than skill). But all in all, Air Power is far from disappointing. It's well thought out, very involving and as the game progresses, it not only becomes a huge tactical challenge but a flying experience that will test your skills to the limit. If you're a fan of Dawn Patrol or you want a flight sim that won't strangle your enthusiasm with hyper-realism and unforgiving aerodynamics, then check out Air Power. It's not a game that will blow you away with superb graphics and sound, but it is a game that's fun to play and difficult to beat. I'm not sure how long it will last you, but in these days of "all graphics, bugger all gameplay", playing a game like this makes a very welcome change.

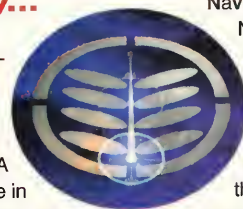
Navy Strike

Navy Strike is Overlord with much faster planes. Like Domark's AV8B Assault Harrier game, you take control of a naval task force, setting up the missions yourself to counter the enemy threat. Navy Strike is a tactical wargame and missions can be flown by the player or left to the computer. Due to be released sometime in August.

Flight Of The Intruder

Rowan's first PC game was based on the novel that nobody had heard of which was later to become a movie that nobody heard of. The words "video" and "straight to" spring to mind. Nice game though.

▼ Guys, you shouldn't have. It was nothing really. Aw shucks.



▲ Most ground missions have multiple targets. Here, for example, this heavy fighter must destroy three buildings, the radio tower and the runway to disable the airbase.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Strategic flight sim

Publisher:Mindscape

Price:£44.99

Contact:(01444) 246333

Prisoner of Zenda meets Dawn Patrol — a weird but brilliant mix of wargame and flight sim.

8



CyberJudas



empire
INTERACTIVE

CyberJudas

Cyber Judas puts you in the presidential hot seat. Rik Henderson was once the president of his school's joyriding club, so who better qualified to have a look?

When I was in the latter half of the sixth form at school (some years back) I joined the Young Conservative party. Why? Because they had exceptionally cheap beer prices in the bar. As soon as a sniff of politics entered the conversations however, I scarpered off to the local kebab shop and calmed down my blood pressure with a large doner and half-an-hour on the Donkey Kong machine. When I matured (and that's debatable), not only did my political ideals shift alliances (ie. I got some), I realised that I actually had opinions and I wanted to do something to change the world.

Unfortunately, like the majority of people who live in this country, I'm a sad, little git with absolutely no chance of having any influence on any political front save for the economy of the local Tandoori restaurant. So Empire has released CyberJudas — the sequel to Shadow President — just to sate my, and people like my good self's, particularly farty world domination aspirations.

If I ruled the world...

CyberJudas is a presidential simulator you see. It allows you to take over the United States with only around four years to go until the next general election, so you have to remain the best leader, and retain a certain degree of popularity in the interim period. If you don't you'll lose the next election and end up serving Fillet O Fish in the local drive-through McDonalds. Fortunately there are three scenarios to play under — true simulation (as normal as the real-life world of politics actually gets), Cabinet Wars (one step up from simulation mode — you also have to worry about the popularity of the people in your own cabinet), and CyberJudas itself (again, not only do you have to worry about your own and your cabinet's popularity ratings, one member of the cabinet is a Judas Escariot, i.e. a traitor). And although it's advisable that you at least start in just simulation mode — you'll need some time to find your way around the game — it's not until you've got the threat of a 'spoiler' amongst your flock that things start getting really exciting.

All the styles of game are laid out similarly. You have a virtual office (hence the 'cyber' part of the name — clever eh?) with different areas to access and this mostly revolves around the map screen, depicting the world and all the countries contained within. Each country can be selected and from there you can perform one of a multitude of different tasks, anything from sending economic aid all the way up to nuking the heck out of them. And although it's



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486 SX, 33MHz

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster and comp.



fun to see the entire population of France end up looking like a Pop Tart that's been left in the toaster a bit too long, this is not the way to launch a charm offensive, make friends and influence people (unless you realise that your own populace are in favour of decimating annoying Europeans of course).

Then there's the offices of your virtual advisors. There's the National Security Advisor, the Secretary of Defence, the Director



▲ **The map screen is where all the decision making takes place. Mainly the decision on which country to launch a thermonuclear assault on next.**



▲ **If you access the WHC icon (White House Chief) you get to find out how well you're doing. As you can see I'm fairly popular at the moment.**



▲ **Here's a break-down of the political ideologies of each country. I wonder what 'other' is... Noddy Appreciation Societies I should imagine.**

empire
INTERACTIVE



It was a complete accident officer, I ordered some 'surgical tights' for my highly trained airforce — honest!



of the CIA, the Economic Advisor and the White House Chief of Staff, all of which are there to help you and urge you to make the right decisions, unless one of them is the Cyberjudas of course. Members of this motley crew will often pop up and invite you into their offices. Each time they do they'll have a topic to discuss with you, and you can decide how important it is in aiding your campaign by seeing the urgency rating they give the assignment. It is also when with the advisors that you realise the quality of the rendered graphics.

The map screens are well-presented, but the animation on the advisors is almost jaw-dropping. They all have some degree of body-language that you should watch carefully (especially in Cabinet Wars and Cyberjudas modes), because they may give a clue as to how they really feel about you. If you're like me however, one shake of their head when they're greeting you and it's time for some covert discipline (ie. hire an assassin to off them), alternatively you can just discredit them in the press, but where's the fun in that.



▲ *In the cabinet you get a right old assortment of characters. I reckon this guy is the Cyberjudas because he looks a bit greasy...*

As I said before though, Cyberjudas mode is the best fun, as all the way through the game you'll be teased to the point of frustration by 'tracer' messages giving you clues as to where in the world the Cyberjudas is operating from. You then have to select the country you think each nugget of information describes, and access the CIA databanks (which are actually taken from the real-life files of the Central Intelligence Agency — presumably with the organisation's permission). If you've got the country right, you can build up enough evidence to convict the culprit, or you could just accuse everyone in your cabinet willy-nilly, but that'll just succeed in you being despised by your own people and, in some cases, get you a bullet through the brain. This may sound a bit limited in terms of gameplay, until you realise that you still have to run the country to your best abilities at the same time — it's not easy and it'll certainly give you more respect



▲ *...Mind you, it could be this fellow. I make such an assumption because he's hiding some needle marks — a sign of obvious guilt...*

GREAT PRESIDENTIAL

No. 1

Abraham Lincoln

The man who abolished slavery in the United States, was scuppered by having a very large chunk blown out of the back of his head in a theatre on 14th April 1865. Thus was born the saying "I need to see a play like a need a hole in the head!"



for Bill Clinton. Er, mind you...

Now for the feature presentation

All this and you're even given an accurate breakdown of the regions resources and current standings as soon as any function is performed — what wannabe politician could ask for more (except maybe some overly made-up trollop with a penchant for Chelsea away strips). And it is the sheer weight of different features that makes Cyberjudas a superb game. As a simulation it's engrossing without being overly complex, and with the randomness of world events the beliefs of other countries, and the statistics of your own staff, you can bet that no two games of Cyberjudas will never be the same.

I know what you're thinking, with simulations it's far too easy to have pages and pages of stats and good gameplay, but disguise it as an old, smelly tramp. Cyberjudas though, looks



▲ *...This member of the cabinet could well be a traitor too. It looks as if he's going to launch into a Russian folk dance, so he must be a bit dodgy...*

SHOOTINGS OF OUR TIME...



No. 2 John F Kennedy

J. F. Kennedy's head was akin to an explosion in a spam factory on 22nd November 1963, allegedly having been shot by Lee Harvey Oswald. One other theory is that a disgruntled librarian from the Dallas Book Depository shot him. Hmmm.



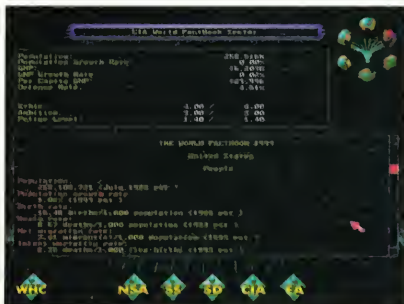
No. 3 William McKinley

President McKinley was also shot in the head by Leon Czolgosz on 6th September 1901 in Buffalo, New York. This basically shows the limitations of presidential assassins — I reckon a good gut shot would at least add variety.



No. 4 Ronald Wilson Reagan

Just when a pattern was beginning to form, Ronnie got it in the stomach. One explanation is that the assassin decided not to go for the head as that would be the least effective place to aim for. Reagan survived, and lead America into recession.



▲ When you go into the accurately researched CIA World factbook, you find out more about each country than you would ever want to know. See, no more excuses for hacking now, is there?



▲ I've started so I'll finish... Are you the Cyberjudas? What do you mean pass? Mr. Secretary Of Defence, you scored 0 with one pass — so now I'm going to have to shoot you!



▲ Most countries start out like this, with each sector representing the standard of that region's capabilities. After I'm finished it ends up looking like the sandpit down Victoria Park.

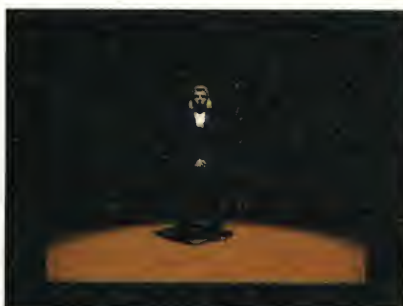
as good as it tastes. All the rendered sequences throughout (and there's one for every action performed) are absolutely stunning, and it really is a showpiece as to how to use such 'interactive' movie sections.

If backed into a corner by an angry mob from the 'give us your verdict now' society, I'd

have to say that Cyberjudas ranks alongside A4 Network\$ as one of the simulations of the year, and both are absolutely essential games for any PC fan. It's funny how the best of this genre tend to sneak up on you without any hype whatsoever, and Cyberjudas has soft carpet slippers on.



▲ ...But then nobody said the Cyberjudas was a man. This women is obviously hiding something, and I reckon it might be a gun...



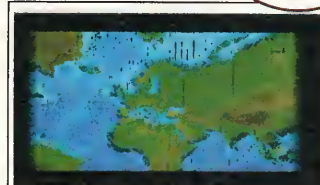
▲ ...Nope, this is the Cyberjudas, and doesn't she look sweet. I say hang her up by the neck... It's the only language she'll understand.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Presidential simulation
Publisher:.....Empire
Price:£44.99
Contact:.....(0181) 343 7337

I've always liked a dabble in politics, and any game that lets you nuke France is a true winner. Superb!

9





When Adam Peters grows up he wants to be an astronaut, or a train driver. Employed even. We think he'll settle for the first option. For a while...



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 25MHz 486, MS-DOS 5.0 or Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster, any Windows compatible

I was a bit dubious about Space Quest 6 before I'd even opened the box. Why? It's that number on the end that fills me with dread. Any series that runs that far in the digit stakes tends not to be an exercise in "building on the characters' great popularity", but rather a case of flogging a horse so dead that even the dog food companies don't want it. Let's take a look at the evidence, shall we? In the world of movies you've got the infantile Police Academy series, the chain of cack-handed sequels to the brilliant first Nightmare on Elm Street film, all those Friday the 13th flicks (if they ever make a Friday the 13th Part 13, I'll don a

hockey mask and kill everyone myself). Hardly an impressive list, is it?

Still, perhaps it is a little unfair to judge a game before even playing it. And things could be worse; at least the Space Quest series hasn't got Steve Guttenberg in it.

Start gagging

What SQ6 has got is a whole series of laboured jokes that wouldn't look out of place in Police Academy. As with Sierra's other main series, Leisure Suit Larry, this game is a graphic adventure sautéed in laddish American high school humour. Whilst most of the satirical object descriptions and wideboy

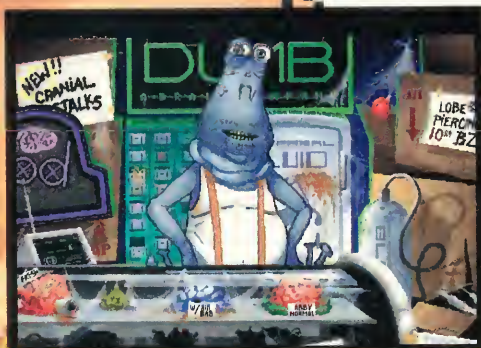


conversations tend to annoy before they entertain, there are a few genuinely funny moments that catch you off guard. For example, when looking round the off licence you encounter over a dozen bottles of drink. You click on each for a witless description, eg "This is Emavilian Brain Juice, imported across eight galaxies and guaranteed to put hair on your internal organs." When you click on the final bottle, you get the message "It's some... green stuff". Honestly, it's funny. You had to be there, I guess.

Where the game does get full marks is in the graphics department — it's wonderfully detailed and cartoon-like. The game world has been peopled by a massive cast of characters. Most of these are just there as screen decoration, though, which can get annoying as you struggle to find someone who will actually speak to you. The point-and-click interface has been simpli-

Space Quest 6

Roger Wilco in the Spinal Frontier



▲ Fancy a new brain? Then why not talk to the helpful alien at Transplants 'R' Us?



▲ The lion is Sierra's little joke at the expense of Wing Commander's Kilrathi.



▲ Space Quest 6 is the best-looking game by far in the Space Quest series.



fied since earlier Space Quest games, and it works well. The main difference between this and the previous games, though, is that now we're in the age of CD and multimedia, so you get full speech and MIDI tunes. Space Quest fans (and there must be a few after five games) have held their breath for long enough, and now they finally get to hear what game hero Roger Wilco sounds like. He just sounds like an ordinary bloke, which is not surprising, since he is an ordinary bloke. What's more surprising is that all the other characters sound like ordinary blokes too, even though they're multi-headed, strangely-coloured alien blobs. In space everyone speaks with a New York accent.

Mission impossible

The big problem I've got with Space Quest 6 is that it's so darned difficult. The plot unfolds as you progress, and although there are some situations set (eg when you've been captured) which

Continued overleaf ►

▲ **It doesn't stop, does it? Even ET makes a guest appearance.**

Stooge Fighter 3

SQ6 is full of spoofs of various science fiction films and TV shows, along with the likes of Batman. Video games also come in for some parody, in the form of Stooge Fighter 3, a beat 'em up featuring special moves (noses tweaks, custard pies) culled from the Three Stooges. Don't expect any real playability from this Street Fighter clone. It's possibly the worst sub-game in computer history. But you're not playing it for entertainment anyway, you're playing it to complete the next puzzle.

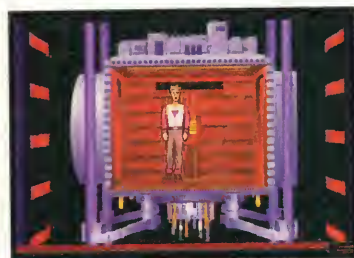


▲ **Oh dear. It looks very much as if Roger Wilco is going to have to talk his way out of another sticky situation.**



ASCON 

The dream starts here...



ALTERNATIVELY

Full Throttle,
LucasArts, £44.99
Rated 9, Issue 44

For those of us who aren't mental giants, Full Throttle is probably more suitable. This superb, cartoon-style adventure is easier to solve than SQ6, and has a gripping plot involving a gang of bikers, lots of atmosphere and amazing graphics.

King's Quest VII
Sierra, £44.99
Rated 8, Issue 40

Another instalment in a long-running saga, KQ7 boasts gorgeous, Disney-style cartoon graphics and a well-crafted (if sugary) storyline. Princesses and mythical beasts take the place of space monsters, so if you're into fairytales, this'll be your bag.

anyone should be able to work through eventually, much of the time it's hard to tell what you're supposed to be doing. This is the sixth game in the series, remember, and each title has been made harder than the last to keep the hardcore SQ fans happy. Rest assured, this ain't no place for anyone without a decent amount of graphic adventuring experience under their belt.

Even the most hardened of gamers will find some of the problems too obscure. In order to illustrate this, I'm going to break all known reviewing protocols and print the solution to one of the problems in the game. This puzzle,

killing the endodroid, is probably the trickiest in the first level of the game. And if you don't want to know the solution, close your eyes now...

"Kick down the door to the right of the bar in Orion's belt to gain access to the basement, where the endodroid is located. Now go to the first floor and scare off the druggies by showing them your security card. Take the hoses from the table. Drag the canister of liquid nitrogen from under the table. Connect the liquid nitrogen to the valve to the right of the table. Go back to the ground floor. Show the bartender your security card and ask him for his special drink. While he's busy, go behind the bar, open the freezer and take the ice cube tray. Turn the third valve from the left on the conduit, then yank the pipe away from the wall. In inventory, click the hand cursor on the hoses to connect them together. Attach the

Roger is stripped of his rank in the intro... and his clothes! ▶



Roger Wilco

After having been promoted to captain in Space Quest 5, Mr Wilco has now reverted to his familiar role of Janitor Second Class. He's very laid back, slightly dopey, but committed to doing the right thing (if only he could). In Space Quest 6 he finds himself assigned to a spaceship that looks like a jockstrap, stranded on a planet, miniaturised and injected into the body of the woman he loves. He also cleans.

The intro is funny once, but you can always skip it if you want. ▶

hose to the conduit at the far left of the bar, then attach the hose to the pipe you pulled from the wall. Go back upstairs and click on the liquid nitrogen to turn it on. Then quickly get down to the basement, where the endodroid will be frozen. Pick up the metal pipe from the floor and hit him with it. Use your broom and dustpan to sweep him up, then put

the pieces in the ice cube tray.

Give the ice cube tray to Blaine Rohmer and he will give you 50 buckazoids."

Now excuse me, but nobody is going to be able to work all that out for themselves, even if

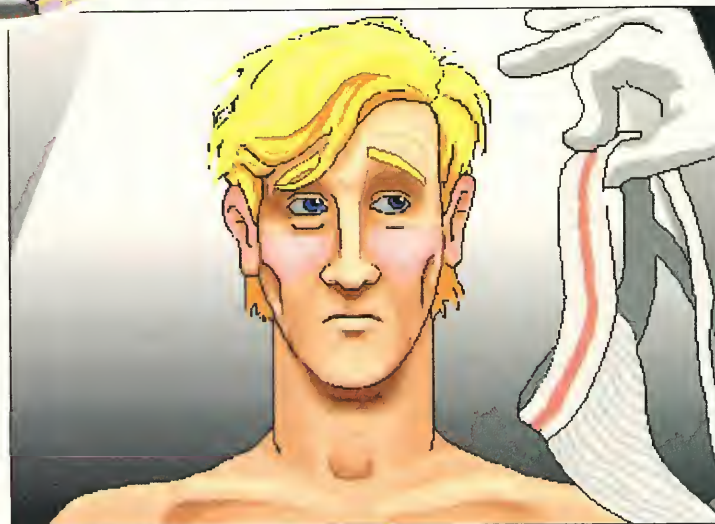
Comedy aliens pop up all through the game...



they live to be 110. I had it written down in front of me, and it took me the best part of an hour to even find the valves. Not, I hazard a guess, the sort of problem you're going to solve by trial and error alone. Sigh.

Big game hunting

OK, you can open your eyes now, but don't think for a moment you aren't going to need that paragraph up there sooner or later. That was just one of the dozens of SQ6 puzzles that require thinking not so much laterally as vertically. This is a big game. The size,



▶ Playing this Street Fighter II spoof is necessary for solving a puzzle in the game...



▶ ...but unfortunately it isn't very good. Still, you have to persevere.



▶ I didn't do very well on my first attempt so perhaps I'd better try again.

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together with the fact that it's no walkover, gives it a good score in the value for money stakes. Even with a reasonable amount of cheating (ie phoning the helpline), it's going to take you months to finish this. Fortunately, there are plenty of save game options, and when you die, you're given the opportunity to start again from the point just before you messed up.

Space Quest 6 is, as I keep reiterating, not for the faint-hearted. If you've got the time and the patience for a game of this size and complexity, then you can't go far wrong. It's big, it's beautiful to look at, the plot soon starts to draw you in, and it's funny enough at points to make up for where it's annoying. Just don't expect it to be easy.



▲ Do my eyes deceive me or is that an Alien on the right?

PCR VERDICT

Type:.....Graphic Adventure
Publisher:.....Sierra On-line
Price:.....£44.99
Contact:.....(01734) 303322

A well-designed and enjoyable romp through seven levels of tricky space spoo.

8



▲ And it's a knockout for the Eddie Honda lookalike. Now I can get back to the game itself. Thank heavens for that.

**Personal
Computer
World**
**EDITOR'S
CHOICE**



Best Sound Card
Sound Galaxy WaveRider 32+
April 1995



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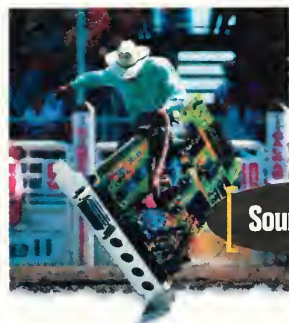
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Would Harry Attrill rather press the cherry imprint of his lips into a garlic cheesecake than play this game again?

Action Soccer

There's this half-decent arcade football game hidden somewhere in Ubisoft's Action Soccer — and it's called FIFA. Actually, that's a bit unfair, but sod it eh? It's a Friday afternoon in July and fairness is for girls. So, Action Soccer acts the cute little game, whereas in truth, it's a frustrating pastiche which, if you play it enough, will sap you of the very will to live.

This game desperately tries to please. It's a lop-eared spaniel, bouncing about like a nutter, beating its tail against your leg. "Ahhh, bless him, he wants to play" you think, before remembering that the bugger slobbers, smells, fouls the pavement and will do absolutely anything, no matter how slavish and demeaning, for a biscuit. In other words, dress it up in any old sentimental tosh, but it's a bloody dog. Are you with me?

Sacrifice

Action Soccer's got 15 imaginary teams with wacky names. It's got a ridiculously hyperbolic commentary from Sky Sport's Jonathan Pearce and isometric graphics which jerk about a bit — but hey — smoothness is something worth sacrificing for a nice bit of gameplay, or so they do say.

Did I mention the side-on and 3D perspectives, the options to change weather, duration of game and team strengths? The usual tournaments? Well, I have now. Time, then, my lovers, for a corner of playability pie, and sadly 'tis now we find all them yellow gristly bits in our gravy. I've finished chewing, so I'll line the big-guns up on the side of your plate for your inspection, shall I...?



CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 486DX
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Sound Blaster

Amusing isn't it. All these crazy creatures to choose from! I know let's make the snails England! Chortle, chortle. ▼



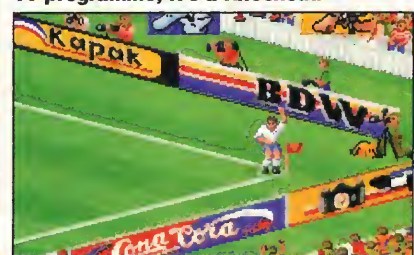
◀ **Button B allows you to flatten an opponent with a shoulder barge. And never get penalised neither. No.**

- 1) An impossible computer-controlled opponent.
- 2) An idiotic passing system.
- 3) The computer gives you control of the wrong player nearly all the time.
- 4.) There's no after-touch.
- 5.) The 'hilarious' commentary is repetitive and oft out of sync. (You can turn it off!)

Action Soccer isn't a terrible two-player game. In a tournament, between consenting adults, there is a modicum of larks to be had. But, by the blessed martyr, there are better ways to spend your cash. Smoking tenners, for example. If you want a new footy game, why not wait and see what happens to Sensible World Of Soccer? You'll get pukka teams, a management option and hopefully, this time, some playability. If SWOS turns out to be a duffer, then top breeders recommend FIFA. You can't say fairer than that. Chum.



▲ **Good game, then? More like that old TV programme, it's a Knockout.**



▲ **There's 15 imaginary teams, each of which has a horribly wacky name.**



▲ **If 3D Action is too much for you, why not opt for the side-on view? Note that "I have green things" are now called England and that it is snowing. Changerama, eh?**



▲ **Shoot from an angle — result, goal! From straight on — result, save! There's no after-touch, see?**



▲ **Excitement alert! In the penalty shoot out you always have a 50/50 chance of making a save!**

PCR VERDICT

Type:Football game
 Publisher:Ubisoft
 Price:£39.99
 Contact:(0181) 941 4008

Not a bad two-player game. But not a good one either. In the words of Pedigree Chum, I think it's a dog...

5



Matt Broughton discovers that he's the royal son of a lost empire. Pah! What, again?

The last dynasty



First impressions are, thankfully, often wrong. With the age-old 'book by its cover' debate still raging across the continents, The Last Dynasty does its best to trick you with what can only be described as, well... a right old crappy opening scene.

We start in the bedroom of a couple of techno-geeks who are carrying out experiments with rockets, and trying to contact alien life forms with broken PCs and gutted radios. Strangely (and you knew this was coming didn't you?) a UFO then lands in the back garden, where upon our heroes jump inside and fly away, only to be pursued by an alien attack force. And so the adventure begins...

Alexis?

The Last Dynasty bills itself as a 'sophisticated combat simulation and a vast adventure game', and fair enough. The combat system is indeed jolly sophisticated, but only in as much as you can customise the display system to a surprising degree. Each of the various enemy and personal speed, energy, and shield meters can be configured to display their information in a number of ways, not to mention happily let themselves be dragged around the screen and even closed down to allow more screen space. But I'm getting ahead of myself. I forgot to mention that at this point you're essentially playing a standard space combat game. I'm using a combination of mouse and keyboard controls, and very comfortable I'm feeling too.

CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 33MHz 486DX
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: All Windows compatible

Apart from the aforementioned displays, the screen also features a nice little front and back radar which, as well as showing what's going on, also doubles up as a short cut to the tactical display. During battle, you can freeze the action, and move to this screen; allowing you to view everything in the game area on a grid from above. You can zoom in, zoom out, rotate the view as you fancy, and use the mouse to select and identify individual craft.

Blake?

As the game and the story progresses, you'll make friends and end up with a number of allied craft accompanying you on missions. It's in these circumstances that you can make real use of the tactical display, utilising it to command your friends. If a mission calls upon you to escort a shuttle to an enemy base, you might want to order one craft to protect the shuttle, another to act as your wingman, and any others to attack key enemy fighters. It's all pretty groovy really, and the varying structure to the missions keeps everything interesting. As you fly around, other ships are contacting you — all via the craft's visual and audio link-up. You also have the sexy tones of the on-board computer offering advice and



▲It's a bit of a mess, isn't it? But then our young heroes won't be staying at home for much longer...

Planet Claire...



This is the extremely useful tactical radar. From here you can plan out your attacks, as well as instruct any allied ships under your command. Of course...

Calling occupants of interplanetary craft...



▲ *Er... the best laid plans, et cetera. Things can get a bit busy, and, well, if we're honest, the chances of me coming out of this alive are pretty slim! Ah, never mind, eh?*



▲ *Blimey! I've actually managed to get one of the fiends in my sights. Now there's a turn up for the books. And, er, fire plasma bolts! Who knows, I might live long enough to see the explosion.*



▲ *Hmm, still alive. Not for long, perhaps, but for now I'm still hanging in there. I might just be starting to get the hang of this lark, eh? But I mustn't speak too soon...*

Get far enough into the game, and it's time for CD number two, and a bit of adventure fun. ▼

ALTERNATIVELY

Wing Commander 3

Origin

Rated 9, Issue 40

Easily winning first prize at the 'Action, Combat and Video-sequences Partnership Awards', WC3 boasts superb gameplay, coupled with excellent acting. This popular classic also has the added bonus of a more interactive plot, where, rather than just watching set video sequences, your actions affect the story's outcome.

TIE Fighter

LucasArts

Rated 8, Issue 45

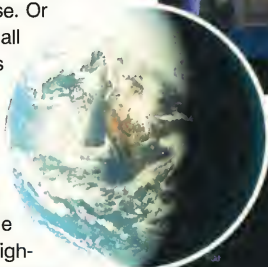
Again, it's all space combat of a mission-based nature, but, well... just brilliant. With loads of cut-scene animations making up for the lack of video (not that it suffers at all) and some excellent combat sequences and scenarios. Then, of course, there's TIE Fighter's dad, X-Wing. But that's another story, a long time ago...

No, it's not very interesting, is it? It's definitely too tidy for my liking, anyway.

keeping you aware of what's going on around you (ie enemy ships who've lost shields, allied craft who've been hit, and so on).

And between all of these varying missions is an unfolding story, with you set as the young 'prince' whose head contains half the ultimate knowledge of the universe. Or something. Your actor takes it all very well considering, and does his best to act in a reckless--human-Buck-Rogers-kind--of-way throughout.

The combat itself is fairly simplistic, but I can't pretend to not have enjoyed myself while playing, and running on a high-end machine, everything looks damn pretty indeed. And then, just when you think you've sussed the game, you land on a planet and the machine asks you for CD number two. And then things get very strange!



▲ *If any ship gets this close to you, you may as well give up right now.*

And there you have it. It's all nice enough, and though hardly ground breaking, it has a charm all of its own, along with enough action to keep the interest. As previously mentioned, the live action isn't the best we've seen, but it's certainly not the worst, and does the job.

Shoulder pads?

The game suddenly jumps from the cockpit, and presents you with a first-person adventure game — resplendent with rendered scenery and ray-traced locations. You don't have as much control as the game would have you believe, and an arrow indicating that you turn right, actually walks you for miles until you're at the door it obviously wanted you to enter.

This adventure section is nice enough, and probably only seems less impressive because up until now you've been screaming around, burning up the stars with lasers and missiles. The graphics are very nice indeed, but I personally found that I wanted to get back to the combat as soon as possible.

Perhaps I'm too easily pleased, but I'd quite happily plod back to The Last Dynasty on a fairly regular basis, if only to have another crack at a mission that has caused me bother before. But whether the game really weighs in heavily enough to mess with the big boys, well, it's really a matter of taste.



PCR VERDICT

Type:Combat/Adventure

Publisher:.....Sierra

Price:£44.99

Contact:(01734) 303171

We've seen it before, but the combat's fun, the adventure varied, and the video helps things along. A good romp.

7



▲ *Private Smith! There's something that looks suspiciously like beer stains on the front of you uniform. And your gun is filthy! Get down on the floor and give me 20!*

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Or call Quarterdeck on 01245-496699.



Since uninstalling the wrong file – say, a shared DLL – can disable other programs, CleanSweep uses SuperLinks to track files that are needed by multiple applications.

 **Quarterdeck®**

World Cup

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHzPC, CD-ROM drive

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound Blaster

Rugby '95

There's a world in union and it's coming to the PC. Rik Henderson swings that chariot low....

OK, so England didn't win the rugby World Cup. And nor did Scotland, Ireland or Wales. It doesn't matter. With World Cup Rugby '95 from Electronic Arts, rugger buggers everywhere can replay all those fantastic ovoid-ball moments again and again.

You can thrash the Ivory Coast 89-0, score a hat-trick of tries against New Zealand and kick huge kicks from the half-way line to beat the Aussies in the dying seconds of a quarter final. You know, that Jonah Lomu isn't half as scary when he's a two inch sprite. But I sure as hell wouldn't say that to his face...

Like FIFA Soccer, World Cup Rugby uses an isometric 3D pitch and, as you'd expect, it looks and sounds superb. There are rucks, mauls and scrums; players turn realistically to set up the ball when they're tackled and to top everything off, the game features atmospheric, if somewhat erratic, digitised commentary. With all 16 World Cup qualifiers featured and all the real player names, this is a game that has the word "slick as an oily fry up" stamped firmly across its forehead.

Team spirit

Of course, underneath the glitzy graphics, World Cup Rugby is fairly standard sporting fare. You can play a one-off friendly, create a customisable league and rewrite sporting history by replaying the World Cup '95 tournament. Like FIFA Soccer, each of the teams has its own set of values that not only determine their running and kicking abilities, but make sure that New Zealand are all-conquering and the guys from Namibia are just slightly less rubbish than the England cricket XI.

But although it sounds and looks great, the gameplay doesn't quite attain such dizzying heights of excellence.

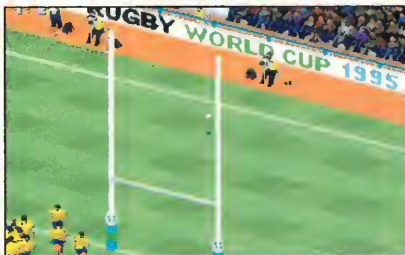
The control system is fiddly and unforgiving and, like FIFA Soccer, you can often kick or pass the ball by mistake. This problem isn't bad enough to spoil the game, but when you play against the top teams the match often degenerates into an endless midfield struggle, plagued by penalty decisions and a distinct lack of action. To be honest, it can get a little dull at times — but then I believe this is more a problem with rugby as a sport rather than with the actual computer game itself.

But if you're a rugby fan, the combination of FIFA-style graphics and your favourite sport is bound to be irresistible.

If you take the time to sit down and play it, World Cup Rugby is a fun and entertaining game. And let's face it, this all makes a nice change from football games anyway.



▲ The control system is simple but fiddly. Pressing one fire button allows you to pass the ball, pressing the other forces a kick, pressing both speeds up your player so he can run faster than Boris Yeltsin when he's been told that the vodka shop's closing early.



▲ When a team is awarded a penalty or converts after a try, the screen resolution switches to 640x480 SVGA mode as you try and hoof the ball neatly between the uprights. And you thought Rob Andrew was impressive...

World Cup Rugby has two separate playing modes. In "Action" mode the ref doesn't call knock-ons and the players don't tire. But change to "Simulation" mode and you'll find all manner of odd things happening to your team's performance. ▶



PCR VERDICT

Type:Sports sim

Publisher:Electronic Arts

Price:£39.99

Contact:(01753) 549442

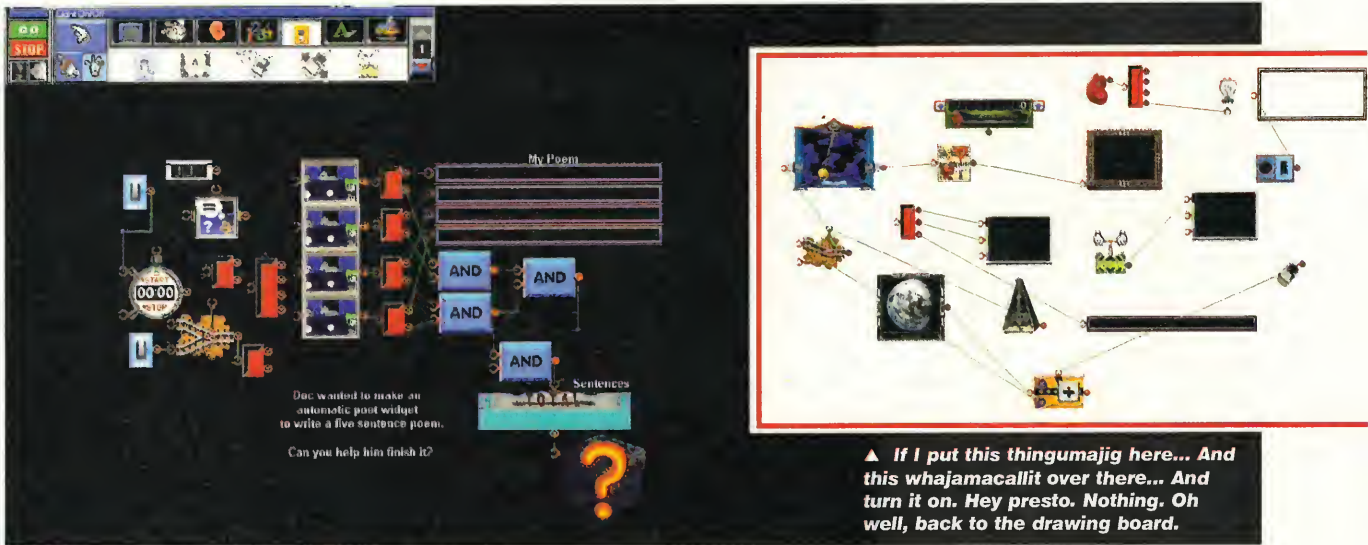
It's fiddly, and it can be a bit sluggish, but it's fun if you have the time and the patience to play it.

7



◀ The animation in the game is superb. Absolutely every aspect of the game has been recreated from line-outs to mauls and from rucks to scrum-mages. And if you've no idea what I'm talking about, the manual has a handy "understand Rugby in five minutes" section.

Turn out the light and your experiments take on a new, dramatic perspective. Now, where has the switch gone. Hello, is anybody there? Help! ▶



▲ If I put this thingumajig here... And this whajamacallit over there... And turn it on. Hey presto. Nothing. Oh well, back to the drawing board.

Widget Workshop

Mike Wigley dons his white coat and experiments - but not down the funny farm, we hope!

CD ONLY
Minimum PC: Minimum PC: 33MHz 386DX, Windows 3.1,
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: Any Windows-compatible soundcard

▶ The menu bar at the top of the screen should provide you with enough gadgetry to solve the most complicated puzzles.

It's scratchy head time again. So, all I have to do is what? Hmm... What does this thing do? What does it do? ▶

British Rail should take a leaf out of this book. Turn on a switch and a train appears. Eventually you should see a light at the end of your tunnel, which is more than can be said about BR's policy. ▼

Widget Workshop is basically a PC-based toy which, whilst being fun to play with, is also educational. In a lot of cases, getting your children to use educational software is rather like trying to make them eat spinach. It maybe good for them, but they'll almost certainly turn their noses up at it unless you disguise it sufficiently so that they don't realise what they're eating. Maxis has done well here. Children (and indeed adults) can learn a lot from playing with Widget Workshop, but it's entertaining enough to hide the fact that it's actually a learning tool. In the laboratory, you can use experiments to find out how to create white light, weigh the world, or (if are still intent on being a sad person) create a random number generator to our digits for next week's al Lottery. Some experiments involve quite a bit of brainwork, so it's best not to get too ambitious straight away. When taking your first tentative steps into the laboratory, I advise you to head straight for the puzzles section. Here you can work through a number of pre-constructed experi-

ments which get increasingly difficult as you progress. When you've reached the tougher problems, you have to solve them using items from the inventory at the top of the screen. The incredibly simple point-and-click interface allows children to concentrate on the problems without having to struggle with the control system, and also provides a really friendly introduction to using the computer.

Heath Robinsonian

Once you're feeling more confident, you can construct your own experiments using the widgets provided — something adults will enjoy just as much as children. In this respect, Widget Workshop is a little like The Incredible Machine — you can use your inventiveness to create huge, Heath Robinson-style machines. However, it relies more on your own imagination than TIM — a very slick puzzle game.

Widget Workshop is an excellent way to get your child's mind working. It's more approachable than most educational products, and also encourages a fair amount of creativity. Building things in Widget Workshop can be very addictive, so you may find that once you've bought it, you're the one who ends up spending most time in front of the screen.



PCR VERDICT

Type:Construction Game
Publisher:Maxis
Price:£29.99
Contact:(0171) 490 2333

A really fun way to stimulate your children's minds and introduce them to the computer.

8





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Dungeon Master II The Legend of Skullkeep

The mother of all 3D role-playing games has a hell-spawn child. It's going to make Farley's rucks out of Gordon Houghton...

▲ The aim for the first part of the game is to collect four pieces of a key which will let you enter Skullkeep. Once inside, you face more tasks — only they're much, much worse.

This year's award for the most ridiculous claim on the back of a box goes to Interplay. It boasts that Dungeon Master II features 'a gaming world that is actually alive'. This is wrong, and I can prove it. I tried feeding the CD on bread and milk (very messy), put it in a box full of straw with the original Dungeon Master to see if they would mate (they didn't), and waited in vain to see if it would breathe, speak or move. No joy.

However, follow the more conventional approach of sticking the CD in the drive and you'll find a role playing game with enough similarities to please fans of the original and enough differences to keep your attention from straying.

The story is, er, mildly interesting. If I tell you that your main goal is to reactivate the Zo Link and venture through a portal to destroy Dragoth and his invading armies, you'll get some idea of what you're up against.

The hero, Torham Zed, is the first member of your four-man party. The other three are chosen from the hall of champions, and specialise in one or more classes (fighter, ninja, priest and wizard). Prepare to be disappointed here:

you can't type in names of your own, choose alternative portraits or re-roll the attributes.

Practice makes perfect

As you might expect, the more your characters practice spells and combat, the more skillful they become. It's always satisfying when you're told that your weedy wizard can wield more advanced magic, or that your fighter can now rip thieves to shreds with his bare hands. A reasonable enough skill, is it not?



Combat forms a large part of the game, but monsters aren't the only hazard. You can die by falling into a pit, getting struck by lightning, starving, poisoning yourself, or simply running into walls too often. Fortunately, there's a resurrection chamber back at base.

This all adds up to an odd game which looks old-fashioned but is also strangely appealing. You'd be forgiven for thinking that little has improved since the appearance of the original Dungeon Master, but like its predecessor, DM2 is tough, gripping and has an atmosphere all of its own. For those reasons alone it's worth your attention.



▲ The bestiary inside is wide-ranging, even if the monster animations are nothing special. Adventurers beware! Increasingly difficult encounters outside Skullkeep barely prepare you for the challenge that lies within.



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Minimum PC: 33MHz 386DX

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: All major soundcards

PCR VERDICT

Type:RPG

Publisher:Interplay

Price:£44.99

Contact:(01235) 821 666

Fans of the original and RPG enthusiasts will relish the tough challenge it offers. Everyone else should think twice.

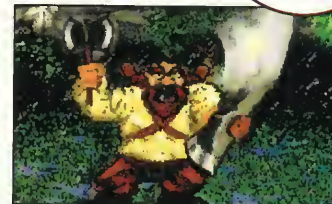
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▲ The viewing window displays either the inventory or a block-scrolling view of the world. This 3D display is quite primitive compared to games such as Doom, but you soon get used to it.



▲ Interplay has provided a variety of weather and terrain types, including subterranean caverns, grasslands, villages, temples and marshes. So feel free to lightly trip through foul and filthy air.



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Across the Rhine



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 66MHz, 486DX2

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: All major soundcards



December 25th, 1944. 'Dear mum... The German offensive is slowing. 'Squiffy' Harris says that the British 29th Division have surrounded the 2nd Panzer Division, but a major attack from the Panzer Lehr Company is moving to relieve them. Things are changing fast. Yesterday I was peeling potatoes in the trenches and today I've been placed in command of the 2nd Armoured Division, charged with stopping Panzer Lehr and liberating the towns of Humain and Haverre. I've no idea what I'm doing but it's great fun. Thanks for the clean underpants, I'm off for another cup of warm mud. Your loving son....'

After what seems an eternity, MicroProse has finally finished *Across The Rhine*, a historically accurate tank simulation with graphics so crisp and clean you could eat your dinner off them. Set between June 1944 and the end of World War II in 1945, ATR recreates the struggle between Allied armour (here this means the Americans) and the German Wehrmacht. You have the option to take command of either American "Armor" or German Panzertruppen, and you can choose to fight one of the many historical battles (which include the Battle for Aachen and the slightly more famous Battle of the Bulge), a lengthy campaign or to create your own scenarios in the custom battle builder.

Into the valley of death...

ATR features various options which allow you to customise the game to suit your playing style. You can adjust the morale of your troops, opt for unlimited ammo, choose the skill of the enemy units

and, if you're Mr Cheat from Cheatland, raise two fingers to the enemy and flick on the invulnerability option. More importantly, you can choose whether you want to control your forces at company or platoon level.

ATR caters for all sorts of arm-chair commanders, from foolish sergeants who want to leap into a tank and drive it

not by the heroics of gung-ho individuals.

Although it runs under MS-DOS, ATR uses a Windows-style display which allows you to keep tabs on the unfolding battle using a combination of 2D map screens (the battlefield map and the full map) and a 3D first-person perspective view. Like Windows, the displays can be resized or moved, enabling you to have all the relevant information at your fingertips.



▲ ATR uses a Windows-style system to display all the important battle information. The Battlefield map is the strategic view, the Full Map allows you to view individual companies and platoons, while the 3D view shows you the action in all its gorgeous, texture-mapped glory.

straight at the enemy, to the more cautious generals who know that battles are won by careful planning and

The battlefield map presents you with a zoomed-out view of the combat theatre, showing clearly where your various companies are located. The full map display is more useful: you can view your units either at company, battalion or platoon level and give them orders (you don't control individual tanks in ATR, you control a platoon of, say, four).

Target practice

By far the most impressive part of ATR, however, is the 3D view, based on texture-mapped polygons. It's not just a glitzy cosmetic frill either — you can jump into a platoon of tanks at any time, driving, firing and running away in the heat of battle. But this isn't exactly easy. It's very realistic but in my experience, lining up your gun turret and actually hitting something (without getting blown



▲ *Across the Rhine* is impeccably presented and polished. It contains with plenty of full motion video clips (no MPEG required, thank goodness) and dozens of black and white photographs for your perusal.

away in the process) requires boundless patience and a degree in mathematics.

But the meat of the game is actually the strategy and, yes, those exciting looking maps. In this respect, ATR is actually more like *Panzer General* than a World War Two version of *M1 Tank Platoon*. It's much more of a strategy game than I expected, and while it's stunningly realistic, I can't help feeling slightly disappointed that (a) you can't control individual tanks and (b) the 3D gunnery is a bugger to get to grips with. It's also a shame that there is no multiplayer option, but ATR is extremely involving and the sheer number of units on the battlefield probably makes this a practical rather than purposeful impossibility.

But perhaps I'm being too picky. ATR is both comprehensive and attractive. It's difficult to mention every facet of the game here (there's a 150 page manual which takes care of that), but MicroProse has a reputation for the historical excellence of its simulations and what *Pacific Air War* did for the Japanese Zero, ATR does for the humble Sherman. Shame there were no Brits in it...

Unfortunately, in ATR control doesn't filter down as far as individual tanks. Like *Fields Of Glory* or the more recent *Civil War*, where one man represented 100 men, in ATR one tank icon usually symbolises four tanks. You can jump in and drive a tank, of course, but this isn't the meat of the game. You can't even have the 3D view full-screen. ▶

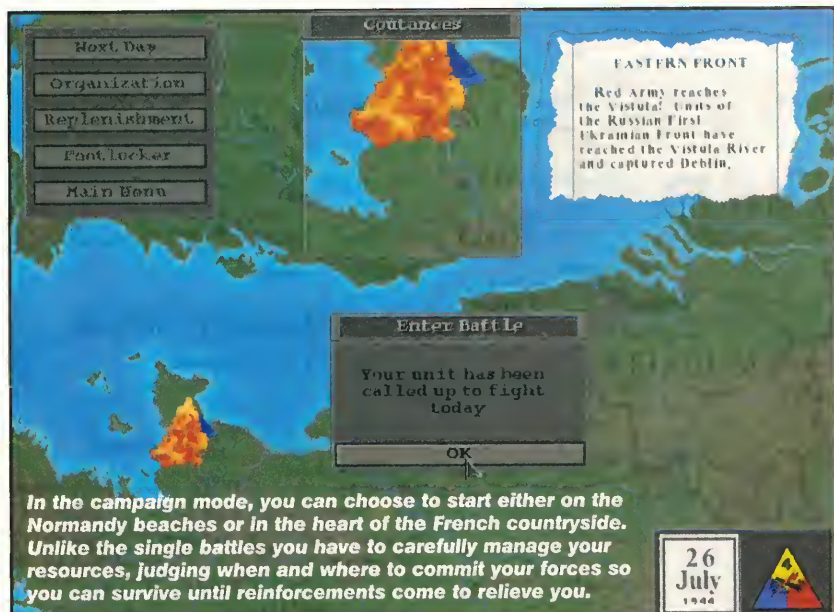
You're History...

Like most MicroProse products, *Across the Rhine* is obsessively realistic. It's jam-packed with historical information including video footage and black and white photos. Before each battle you can view the structure of your armoured division, zooming in to examine individual platoons where you can access vehicle histories, 3D models and stills. So if you're desperate to know the average weight of a Sherman M4 or how big the gun barrel on a Panzer Mk IV was, you can indulge your military curiosity here. In addition to the 150 page User Manual, ATR also has an equally weighty Historical Manual, which gives you an insight into this period of World War Two, the personalities, the military hardware, a crash course in tank tactics and, of course, a run-down of all the major battles.



◀ The Sherman tank is one of several units you have at your disposal, but it's also the most important (unless you're playing the Hun).

◀ If the enemy is trying to sneak a couple of mechanised infantry units behind your company, you can detach individual platoons from the main force and send them off on their own to assault, hit-and-run or defend.



In the campaign mode, you can choose to start either on the Normandy beaches or in the heart of the French countryside. Unlike the single battles you have to carefully manage your resources, judging when and where to commit your forces so you can survive until reinforcements come to relieve you.

26 July 1944

PCR VERDICT

Type:Battle simulation

Publisher:Microprose

Price:£39.99

Contact:(01454) 326 532

At night I dream of Uma Thurman, but if you're a strategy buff you'll dream of *Across The Rhine*.

8



Perfect General II

**CD ONLY****Minimum PC: 25MHz 386, mouse****Minimum memory: 4Mb****Minimum graphics: SVGA****Sound: Sound Blaster**

On the whole, hex-based strategy games tend to be much of a muchness. Perfect General II slips into the masses as a game which is easy to play and nice to look at, but which doesn't pretend to break the wargames mould in any way. The hexes are there, it's definitely turn-based and all the usual line-of-sight, armour penetration and movement rules apply. Its SVGA graphics are colourful, with bright blues and reds invading maps which, in most wargames, are usually drab khaki and gun-metal grey. Little animation



clips pop up at key moments, and the music's upbeat, too, with enjoyable sound effects adding to the atmosphere.

The one thing that makes Perfect General II a little bit different from the rest of the field is the user-friendly interface. It is clearly designed so that beginners can slip as easily into the game as experienced players, without getting bogged down with minor details. The initial options screen allows you to shelve all the complex rules and stick to a basic scenario against an easy computer opponent, before moving on to bigger things and more intelligent enemies.

Over 70 missions are included, with a handful of full campaigns, and Mindscape is promising an add-on scenario editor soon — all in all it should be enough to keep any gamer busy. However, and this is where hardcore wargamers start grumbling, there aren't that many different types of unit; the ones in the World War II and Vietnam scenarios are identical with the same characteristics. This is not only unrealistic, but means that you're ready for a little more visual variety after a while. Perhaps that's the price you pay for consistency between missions, which stops each one being overly confusing.

In the end, Perfect General II is fun and challenging for beginners to the genre. For the dedicated wargaming fan, though, it might still feel a little bit lightweight.



▲ The options available are quite good, allowing you to tailor the game around to whatever format suits you best. Hardcore wargamers will probably prefer Line-of-Sight rules on, while novices can take the no-frills options.



▲ A lovely sunny day, but watch out for rain, which turns the map blue. Each condition changes the game completely.



▲ Moved units get crossed off on the map, while the bar at the top tells you which phase of the turn you are in.

Fight the good fight

The enemy's in the desert and I'm in the swamps — I'd rather swap my mosquitoes for his suntan but the blighter isn't keen on the idea. Time to draw up the battle lines...



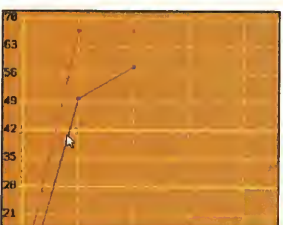
▲ This is how the territory looks at the start. I'm the attacker (red), bottled up in the stinking marshes. He's got a head start with Uondo already in the palm of his sweaty electronic hand.



▲ The computer shoves most of his troops into the desert, while I opt for a long thin line to advance at once. The towns' values are shown to tell you each one's strategic importance.



▲ A couple of turns down the road (literally), and I'm gun to gun with his heavy tanks. He's taken the northern town of Dolo for 300 points, and only my artillery is keeping me in the game.



▲ Is it as bad as it looks? Er, yes. The chart function demonstrates that shelling your units as they trundle towards the enemy is not a good move. The next few turns could be the clincher.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Wargame

Publisher:Mindscape

Price:£39.99

Contact:(01444) 246333

Good gameplay, but unfortunately Perfect General II doesn't push the strategy envelope.

7



Terminal Velocity



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz, 486DX

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound Blaster, Gravis Ultra

Dead fast. And so was Pat Fox when he offered to save the Earth and test Apogee's remarkable 3D shoot 'em-up....



With a 3D engine created by the lead programmer of Microsoft Flight Sim 5.0 and the game-play elements of Interplay's Descent, Terminal Velocity is a game that doesn't just sit up and beg to be noticed, it does cartwheels, juggles flaming knives and plays 'Jerusalem' on a milk bottle. And why the big hoo-hah? Well, despite the fact that it looks little more than a 3D texture-mapped shoot 'em-up, TV is a highly addictive and immensely playable game. Think of it as Descent in the open-air or X-Wing in the mountains, a game that neatly recreates the aerial thrills of Magic Carpet without the bloke on the rug (or the need for a high-end PC).

Free to do as I want

However you describe it, the main attraction of Terminal Velocity is that you can fly anywhere over the texture-mapped landscapes, down into huge valleys, across snow-capped mountain peaks and deep into the guts of giant star-cruisers. The gameplay is ludicrously simple and it boils down to blowing up a wide variety of enemy fighters, tanks and ground installations on an equally wide variety of planetary surfaces. There isn't much of a plot to speak of, just the usual rubbish about alien invasion



◀ The landscapes in Terminal Velocity range from ice-covered wastelands to lava floes and fog-covered mountain ranges. In multi-player mode you can select which landscape you want to fly over, whether you cooperate or opt for deathmatch and, when you use Apogee's Remote Ridicule technology, which digitised taunts you send to your enemy.

and a lone pilot who's got to battle overwhelming odds to save mankind. All you really need to know is that you've got to have good reflexes, a well-muscled trigger finger and an endless appetite for explosive action.

Every level is split into three different sub-levels and these in turn each have a specific mission, such as destroying an installation,

that must be completed before you can move onto the next stage. Of course, it's not all plain sailing. When you start your campaign, your ship is poorly equipped, but there are extra weapons and power-ups to be collected.

Terminal Velocity is an incredibly enjoyable game. The 3D is smooth and fast, even on a 486, and with 27 levels to overcome, an eight player network facility and an SVGA mode, it's not a game that will bore you quickly. Better still, the first three levels are available as shareware so you can try it before you buy. What are you waiting for? Christmas?



▲ The the second planet consists of this huge trench which is defended by laser turrets — but even on a Pentium the gameplay isn't exactly jerk-free.



▲ The third planet is actually a leviathan spacecraft called the Moon-dagger. But you'll need fast reflexes if you're going to survive the attack.



▲ With a Magic Carpet-style 3D landscape, an ordinary shoot 'em-up becomes a highly impressive game. Thrill and gasp as I swoop across the surface of an ice planet....



▲ Like Descent, every third mission on a planet can only be completed by destroying a big end-of-level guardian. Shoot the four shield generators that surround it and then fire like crazy.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Shoot 'em-up

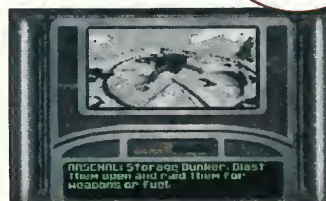
Publisher:US Gold/ Apogee

Price:£34.99 CD/£29.99 Disk

Contact:(0121) 606 1800

Descent in the open-air, X-Wing in the mountains — it's simply one of the best shoot 'em-ups to appear on PC.

8



Micro Machines 2

Jim Gillies is let loose from the backseat in the only vehicle he can be trusted with, a toy car.

Unless you've been living in a cave for the last few years, you'll probably have a good idea of what MicroMachines 2 (hereafter referred to as MM2 to save the wear and tear on my poor fingers) is about. Like its poorly received predecessor, it's a top-down racing game, featuring various toy vehicles racing round some rather bizarre race circuits. That's the meat of the game but, as one of the key ingredients that go to make up the best meals, there's a good deal in the way of garnish.

For a start, there's well over a dozen vehicles to choose from, including jeeps, trikes, hovercraft, helicopters and dragsters, all of which handle like breeze blocks when I'm behind the wheel (OK, so I spent more time off-track than Ladbrokes and William Hill put together). Codemasters promises that the 17 different surface textures (varying from glass to sand) have different effects on your chosen vehicle's handling, but I didn't find them that noticeable. As for courses, there are 54 of them, but some are just variations on a theme while others are more whimsical than playable. And even despite my inordinate fondness for lavatory humour, I found the toilet seat oval one of the least satisfying.

One totally new feature in MM2 is the constructor set. While the idea of designing your own track may seem immensely appealing at first, the reality of actually doing so quickly pales and you realise that the existing courses are already better than anything you could come up with. The graphics in MM2 are pretty basic, but that compliments the 'racing toys around your bedroom' feel of the game.

But it goes without saying that the best part of any meal (despite what my mother might

▼ *Come on then, what poser left their mobile on the kitchen table?*



◀ *A car and a cake. What more could you ask for?*

say) is dessert. And in this case, dessert means multi-player options. You can play head to head with up to four players (using a combination of keyboard and two joysticks) and up to 16 in 'Party Play', a knock out tournament. The multi-player options are what MicroMachines 2 is all about. Play with your friends, or not at all.



It's a lot less bopper with a hover. ►

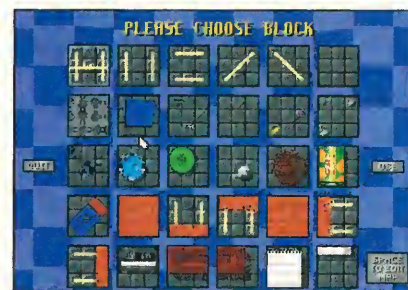


CD AND DISK
Minimum PC: 386DX
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Sound Blaster

You know how whenever you go to play pool, you can never find the chalk? Well, now you know where all those missing chalks ended up. ►

The construction set allows you to do everything from choosing the surface texture to editing all the actual vehicles. Fun fun fun! ►

Okay, I admit that I saw this screen so often I entered a pseudonym so that no one would know it was me. ►



PCR VERDICT

Type:Arcade
Publisher:Codemasters
Price:£39.99 (disk), £49.99 (CD)
Contact:(01926) 814132

Fun with your friends, not much fun without them. Constructor set? Well, only if you enjoy designing Doom wads...

6



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Warriors

What are Dean Evans' chances against Atreid's fighting elite, what with his terrible affliction, poor lad? Read on...

Take a trip back in time to just 18 months ago and it's more than likely that you'd find a great many PC owners either battling the Imperial forces in X-Wing, or raving about this great new version of chess they'd bought. The PC was an 'adult' machine, and although it was capable of doing accounts and simulating an F-15 over Saudi Arabia, when faced with arcade games it was about as competent as a baboon trying to park a family hatchback at Sainsburys. If you wanted to play, say, a beat 'em up, you'd have to buy a console. Ugh.

Jump and thump

But these days you don't need a £120 lump of plastic to play arcade games. Following the PC version of Mortal Kombat 2 and the 3D violence of FX Fighter, Mindscape's Warriors is the latest game to gatecrash the increasingly crowded beat 'em up party. It's familiar fighting fare, and like MK2, the idea is to deplete your opponent's energy through a combination of kicks, punches and special moves.

OK, so nothing new there. But although Warriors looks like a traditional 2D beat 'em up, it gets a big pat on the back for originality. But unlike MK2 and StreetFighter, Warriors allows you to interact with the gorgeous backgrounds. Characters can inflict more damage by hanging from ledges or trees before dropping onto their opponents, or they can pick up various weapons, like baseball bats and axes, which can be used to tip the balance of a fight. Naturally, there's a wide variety of character-specific special moves.

Two can play that game...

If this isn't enough, it can be played in either VGA or SVGA, and features two separate fighting views: a bog-standard 2D view and a semi-3D airborne view. There's also a replay facility for reliving your greatest moves and, of course, you can choose between the usual single and two player game options. And on to the nit-pick-

ing. There's not much to grumble about, but I did find that Warriors lacks the polish of both the recent StreetFighter and Mortal Kombat games; the characters aren't as charismatic or easily identifiable as those in StreetFighter II and, unlike MK2, you're going to need a powerful PC to run it. But then, that's true of everything these days and although you could say that Warriors doesn't have the 'gosh-wow' pull of FX Fighter, it's still a neat, addictive and very playable game.

◀ **Take a deep breath, this is the monster you have to take on!**

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 50MHz, 486DX

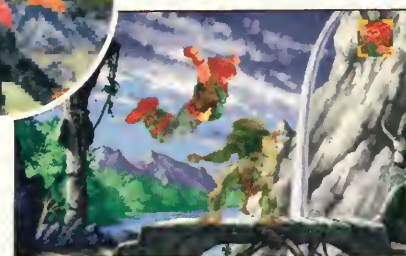
Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound Blaster, Gravis



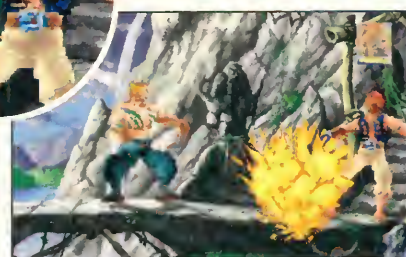
◀ **The characters are made using Mindscape's 3D Bio Motion technology and full 3D models, so from any angle their movements are fluid and lifelike. The animation is very realistic.**



◀ **The Master has gathered the 10 best warriors on his island, each of whom has special combat moves and techniques. To escape you must beat them, and then the Master. Piece of cake...**



◀ **Although the game is principally a 2D VGA beat 'em up, you can change the screen resolution to SVGA as well as altering the view to a more 3D angle.**



◀ **If you're a beat 'em up novice you can use the two player mode to play against someone who's even worse than you are, while nine separate difficulty levels should keep frustration at bay.**

PCR VERDICT

Type:Beat 'em up

Publisher:Atreid/Mindscape

Price:£39.99

Contact:(01444) 246333

An addictive beat 'em up with bizarre specials and new characters, but lacking the polish of Mortal Kombat 2.

7



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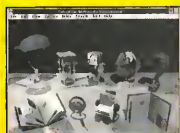
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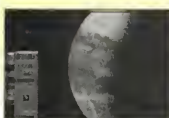
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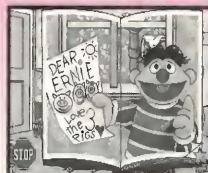
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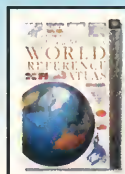
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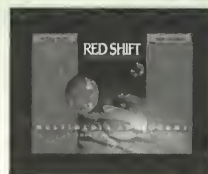
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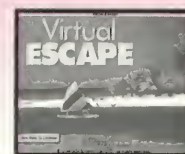


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Bloodwings: Pumpkinhead's Revenge

A second-rate game based on a second-rate horror film... Gordon Houghton can hardly contain his excitement.

Since the release of Doom there has been a flood of fast, first-person 3D games aiming to emulate (or cash in on) the excitement and power of Id Software's superb blaster. Some of these, such as Dark Forces and Heretic, have been very impressive. Unfortunately however, Bloodwings: Pumpkinhead's Revenge, is not.

Loosely based on a little-known horror flick, Bloodwings features the usual dark dungeons, claustrophobic corridors, manic monsters and plenty of goodies to pick up and keep. There are



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: 256col VGA

Sound: All major Sound Cards



▼ Spitting skeletons provide a few moments of relief from the general tedium.



three difficulty levels to sort the softies from the psychos, and enough variety to ensure that if you buy this by mistake you still have some kind of challenge.

But in spite of that, the tiny viewing window, sluggish controls, blocky graphics, fuzzy speech and dull game-play all add up to a pretty tedious experience. Avoid like the plague.



▲ Enter the virtual vortex and grab what you can — if you can be bothered.

PCR VERDICT

Type: Shoot 'em up

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Price: £39.99

Contact: (01753) 549442

Don't be fooled by the superficial similarities to Doom: this is a very poor clone

3



shorts

HAND OF FATE

(Point & click adventure)

When our very own doyenne of loveliness (Cal Jones) visited Hand of Fate on its original release she gasped at its gorgeous scenery and marvelled at the fun for all on display. A return visit by game shorts showed that the country was still unspoiled by the tramp of gamer's feet. The game is a sequel to the well received Legend of Kryandia. Help the (for a nice change) female



hero find out why pieces of land keep disappearing and do something about it. There are plenty of locations and puzzles. If there was very little excuse for buying this on its original release then there's none on budget.

Virgin Interactive £14.99 • (0181) 9602255 • 386, VGA, CD-ROM, 2Mb



7

THE BITMAP BROTHERS COLLECTION

(Compilation)

The Bitmap Brothers have been around for years, and this collection includes five of their more memorable titles. Xenon 2, a shoot 'em-up, moves a tad too quickly on today's speedy PCs. Speedball 2 (which simulates a Rollerball-style sport) is fast, fun and satisfyingly violent, but again looks a dated. Magic Pockets and Gods are platform games, the latter being the better of



the two, and The Chaos Engine is the best (and most recent): a fast, action blast with a 'steampunk' theme.

Warner £29.99 • (0171) 343 4100 • 386 DX, VGA, CD-ROM, 4Mb



7

ON THE BALL: WORLD CUP EDITION

(Football Management Simulation)

On the ball is an impressive football sim with all the bells, whistles and recorders that you'd expect. The interface is of the clean, simple, get down to match day style of games like Ultimate Soccer Manager. There are some very nice touches too. Keeping the balance of personalities, as well as skills, right in your team; getting to bed early (I'm serious) and making sure you takes the kiddies to the park.



On the ball is impressively deep — oceanic trench deep in fact — and you will have to put in the time to get the best out of it. That said, it is on budget and surely worth a look.

Daze £12.99 • (0171) 3727497 • 386, VGA, 4Mb



6

PERFECT PINBALL

(Pinball simulation)

It's another pinball compilation from 21st Century — the people who brought you Pinball Dreams, Mania, Fantasies... Perfect Pinball contains all the tables in Pinball Dreams 1 & 2 along with one from Pinball Fantasies, but aside from the Fantasies table, the same package was on offer in Pinball Deluxe. That's not to say there's anything wrong with Perfect Pinball. It has some good tables like Revenge of the Robot



Warriors but there's nothing new. If you didn't buy any of the other compilations then it's well worth it. If you did, spend your pennies elsewhere.

Daze £14.99 • (0171) 3727497 • 386, VGA, 570K



5

And finally, the concluding part of our Dark Forces solution. At last you get to leave the Emperor with egg on his face, and we can stop working out the answers and get back to playing the game.

dark forces



solutions



Mission 10: Jabba The Hutt's Ship

1. Ding, ding! Round One: The Kell Dragon

There's no way around it — you've got to duke it out, man to man, with the Kell Dragon. Once it's dead you can leave by the eastern door. Move around the wall ahead to the right and you'll come across a switch in the doorway to this smaller area. Activate it, then go back to the wall you were facing. You can now jump up and walk along the ledge provided you stick close to the wall.

When you are in between two walls at the top of this ledge, keep going along in front of it, and across the wall on the other side. At the end of this is a higher floor and then another one, which is where you'll get your greasy paws on the blue key. Fall back down and head north, until you reach a large gap. Jump across to the ledge from which the grenade lobber was annoying you (until you killed him), then cut across south, to the floor that is level with you. Push the button and go through the door in this room, then hang a left through the open door.

2. It's your gear and you'll cry if you want to...

In the next room, suspended on a chain, is your gear. Jump up, grab it, continue on and pull the switch in the next one. Go through the doorway but be careful of mines as you pass through this room to the next. Pull the switch, go back and turn left up the stairs. Set off the mines in front of the left door, go through it and you'll find the red key in the room at the end.

Go back to the other door and into the lift at the end of this room. Pull the

switch that the lift takes you up to and walk across to the door. Go through the corridors to another lift that takes you up a floor. Go around left to re-enter the room that you were in seconds ago, but now on a higher level and leap across to the other raised part ahead.

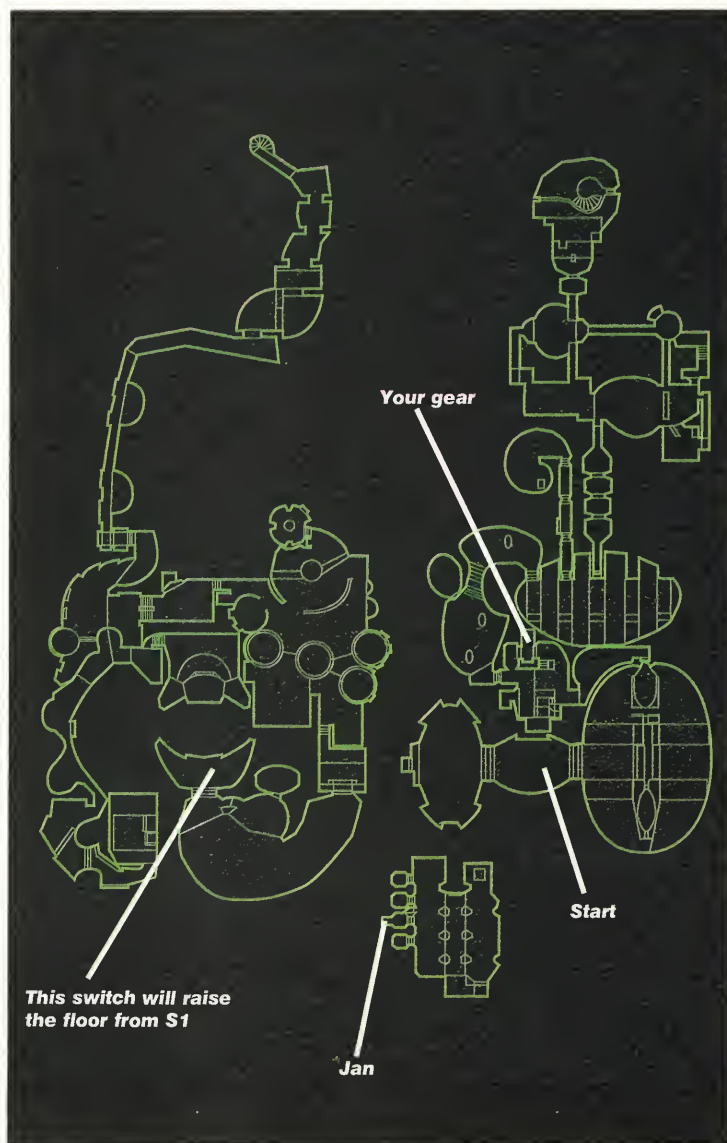
In the next room drop through the hole in the floor and you'll find yourself in water — considering there are sewer creatures lurking around, it's probably best not to speculate about where the water came from. Move around the corner to the right for the yellow key. Now go up a level, and through the door. When you reach the large room, go left until you find huge, engraved pictures of Jabba, and you'll find a secret door.

Keep going forward until you find the bar. Head around the left corner to the main bar and order yourself a bracing drink (a whisky sour is best). In the room behind the bar is the nava card. Through the door to the south is a drop.

3. Rescue the fair maiden (ie Jan)

Fall down and continue south. Jump up the two raised floors and move into the big area. Push the switch, go forward and then right until you reach another switch — this will reveal some much needed supplies in a store behind you. Go around this, down the stairs in the left wall and drop down. Go around to the opposite side on the ledge and look back. There is a small room just below the point where you originally entered and a hole beyond this room's far wall. Jump over the room into this hole.

To the left is your ship. If you leap across the gap to the doors on the far side, you'll find Jan in one of them.



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Mission 11: Coruscant — Imperial City

1. Stone faced

Exit the round area and go left around the corner. At the far wall of the drop a walkway leads to a secret door. Go through to a square area (there are three square areas here, but keep looking until you find a lift, away from the square area, to the south). Go down into the city.

When you enter the large courtyard there is another repeater up a lift right in front of you. To activate it, shoot the button above it. In a small yellow alcove is an engraved face, which hides a button in its mouth. This opens when activated — punch the button and save yourself a lot of trouble. Besides which, it's a picture of the Emperor, so you'll probably feel like punching it anyway.

2. The ISO building

On the west side of the courtyard are a few steps which lead to a lift. This will take you, via a ledge, to the next one. Open the door ahead of you and you'll see a roof with searchlights crawling across it and in the far corner, the blue key. Collect it and jump across to the next building — the ISO building. Go through the door and the whole floor will move down. Once you reach the bottom, exit through the door and meet about 20,000 Imperial troopers who are desperate to talk to you.

3. The question

When they're satisfied with your answers (or you've killed them all), go inside, but watch out for the four turrets in the entrance room. Once in the central area, leave through the door at the north, then carry on through the left hand door in front of you. Push the lever on the left wall and then pull the lever that is on the other wall, twice. Jump up onto the yellow block and leap into the high door in the wall.

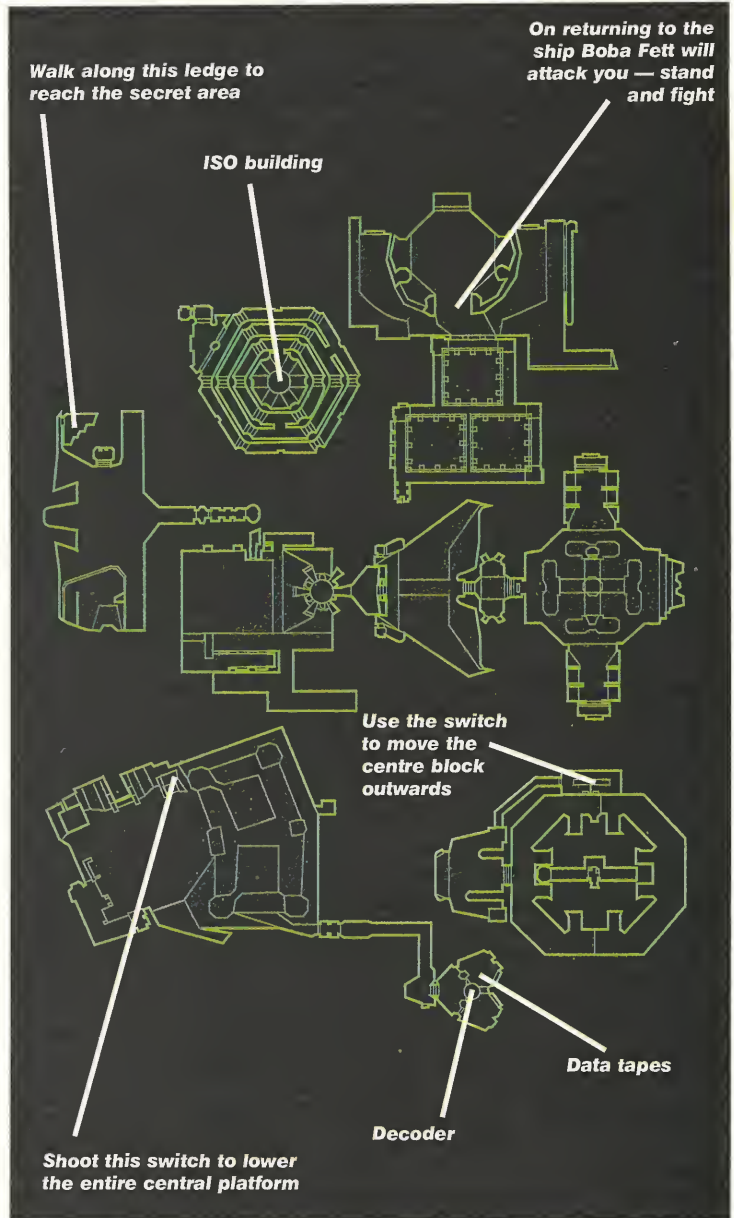
Walk through the switch-activated door and fall down into the room. Walk around the corner, then past the next yellow wall and you'll find the red key, plus the assault cannon (wow!). Open the door in this room and go through the other one ahead. Go up in the lift and then down in the one you'll find ahead of you. Keep moving and you'll reach the roof of the building, where you will want to walk left through a large door, but try not to get killed by the Phase 1 Dark Trooper who is loitering about.

Activate the switch and go back to enter the newly revealed door and go down the lift, then right. Here you'll find a diagram of the vault on this floor (if you check your overlay map you'll find you're in the upper-left corner of the diagram). Blues are switches, reds are doors and there are gaps into the inner section. If you go to one of the nearby doors you'll find that pushing the switch repeatedly opens one door each time — the outer, the inner, then the central. But which doors do you have to leave open to get to the centre?

4. The answer

Move around the outer circle opening all the doors. When you're back in the first room, return to the first door switch you activated. Now move round anti-clockwise, working the switches as follows: central, central, central, inner and inner. Now go through the gap next to you and walk round to the central chamber, where you'll find three switches on the middle column — push them all and you've cracked the central vault.

Go to the decoder, push both the buttons, insert the nava card and wait for the tape to be written. Now hustle back with your best weapon at the ready but make sure that you keep a keen look out for something nasty.



Mission 12: Ergo — Imperial Fuel Station

1. The key thing

Leave the dock and turn left when you go through the curved door and then past the next one. Go past the inner curved door and the bar is to your right. Kill the officer and take the blue key from his slowly cooling body.

Return to the inner curved door, go through it and up the right set of steps. Move around the left corner, past the set of stairs and into a large area where you should find a button next to you. Push it and go down the revealed lift to a large area. Push the button revealed by the walkway and run back, jumping onto the walkway before it rotates too far.

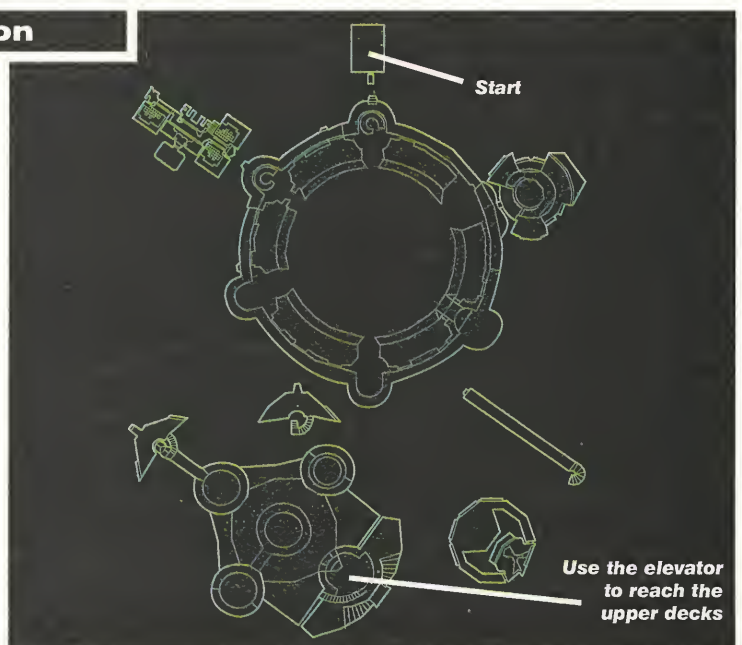
2. Stowaway

When it stops you'll see another button — push it and run back to the walkway. Do exactly the same again the next time it stops. Now walk onto the higher floor

and go up in the lift and along the corridor. From here you'll see two doors — go through either and you'll find yourself in the control room. On the controlling screen in the middle of the room you can see an access corridor. Move this corridor around so it links with the smuggler ship.

3. Travel to the Executor

Return to the long circular corridor with the curved doors and go clockwise. Enter the first door you come to and in the room at the top of the stairs you'll find more ammunition for the assault cannon. Go through the corridor you moved and you'll find the smuggler ship at the end. An officer on board has the key needed to get to the bridge (he's at the south). Reach the bridge and travel to the Executor.



Mission 13: The Executor

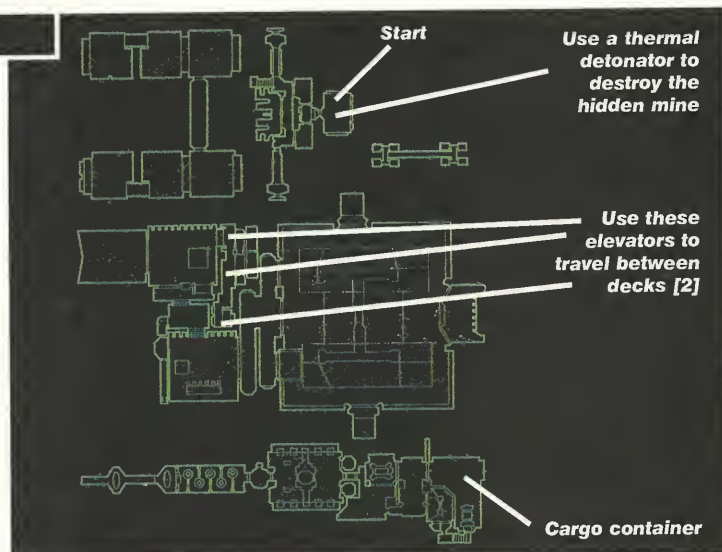
1. Mine(d) your feet

Watch out as you leave the bridge, there's something nasty on the floor. Leave the ship via the lower storage bay where you'll find a switch that will open the large door nearby. Walk towards it to activate the lift that will take you up. Go through the other door ahead, then right and into a lift to go up to a bay. Go up the other wall that's in the lift to your right, keep going until you find an area with alternating columns and doorways. Don't go up in the lift in the first doorway yet — jump to the first pulsating column top you see and keep jumping across the chamber until you reach a door. Go through and then left, up the lift. Around the other side of the console is a small shoebrush door — crouch down and go through it.

2. Trouble, Phase two style

Go back down, through the large door you'll see to your left and enjoy venting a bit of feeling as you kick Phase 2 Dark Trooper butt (hopefully). Collect the objects, go through the door that opened and into the cargo shuttle bay. As you move through the rooms, push the buttons next to the windows that show the shuttle bay.

Soon you have to turn it, then move it, by pushing one of two buttons (the one that works) followed by the next one. After that, move around, through the small door in this last room and then into the cargo shuttle. Now that you've made it (phew), stowaway to the Arc Hammer and pray for rain.



Mission 14: The Arc Hammer

1. The plasma welding arm

Exit the cargo shuttle and you'll find a red lift shaft around the corner. Activate it, ride it down and hang a left. Destroy the plasma welding arm and pull the switch beyond it. Return to the lift, go up, then right, then ahead. There'll be a new walkway that leads to a red door which you should go through (although let's be honest, if you were sensible you'd still be getting paid by the Empire instead of looking for Dark Troopers). When you find a drop, past a split doorway, look down and you'll see a Phase 1 Dark Trooper — kill him from your vantage point then go along this ledge into a darker area. Use the infra-red goggles and crouch under the turrets to get more ammo. Now go back to look down at the other drop — to your left when you come back — activate the lift and go down. Destroy the Phase 1 trooper and continue up the raised floor.

2. Trooper trouble

On the walkway, push the button and go back down to the slightly lower floor. Look right and jump into the opened door. Run around to the other side of the room from the Phase 2 — there may be a super shield charge here and once you've destroyed the Phase 2, move around up the lift and into the room with several supports.

Slide along the left wall and through the passageway. Activate the button to move the staircase up, go up it and jump into the darker area. Jump over the gap to the left — to the narrow ledge — move along it and look right. Jump at the switch you see and activate it before you fall. Get back up and move along the ledge to find another passage level with you. Jump to the thin ledge on the nearby pillar, then into the passage.

Walk through it, and when you see a red door turn to the left and crouch to get under the low ceiling. Move through

these corridors and when you have to duck again, destroy the turret and fall down. Ahead is a coupling, but first you have to shoot a button in one of the right pistons. Now set the charge into the coupling.

3. More power couplings

Go back up the lift and you'll find the red door open. Go through and you'll see a lift, so push the button to move it down. Go through the door down here and go round to the rapidly moving floors. Jump onto the floor to your left, then to the floor on the other side when you can. The moving floor reveals a low passage with an extra life. Travel up the moving floors (you can leap over to get any stuff but you can't open the red door right now) then fall down and go around the corner and up the lift. Go right up to the wall, then cut across the corner to power coupling number 2.

4. Next customer please

Go across the corner at the other side and return by the conveyor belt. Jump across the gap and through the now open red door. Head down the lift, through the door ahead, really annoy the guards near the power generation units (killing them usually does it) and then enter the door on your right. Move right onto the belt and be ready to duck.

There is a door on the wall that curves out and after going in, get on the belt but be ready to shoot the button ahead. After you do, run along this belt before the door at the other end closes. When on solid ground go through the red door, around to the next one and onto the red belt. Be ready to duck and jump. At the first fork, go right, then left (watch out for the holes), then left again and you should come to a break. Carry on to the belt next to you (ducking and jumping as you go).



When you reach the end there is a switch which will stop the belts. This is rather handy really, because you're going back up them. The first gap you come to is a lighter area — fall down and walk through. When in the dark, go right and you've got another puzzle. You have to push each corresponding button (the one furthest right moves the rightmost wall gap behind you). The gaps you see have to be moved to make one continuous circuit. When you've done that, go back to the dark and continue to the lift ahead. You can now go through the passageway.

5. Mohc trouble

On your left is the last coupling, which can be reached, again, by a button in a piston. Now go back around left to a lift, go down and through the door ahead to the shuttle bay (keeping a weather eye out for Phase 2 type trouble). Look left to

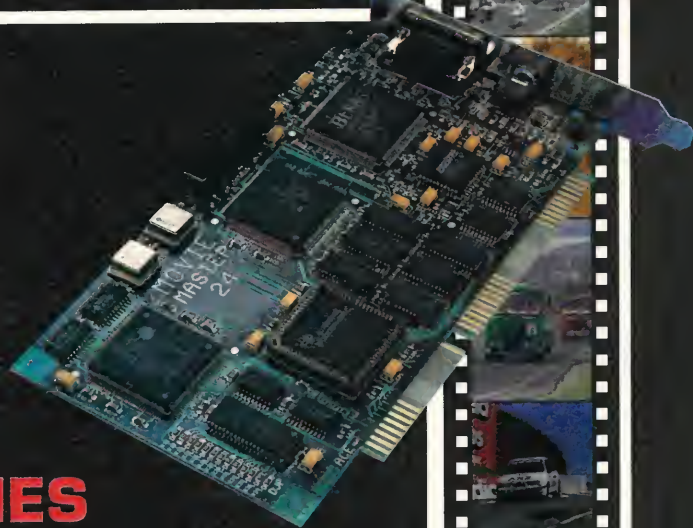
see a floor at the same level, and jump on to it. More Dark Troopers and a revive await at the end of a stroll to the doors. When all the troopers are dead, a door in the middle will open revealing a curved wall within.

If you walk through to the new room you'll fall down a very short way. Now activate the switch on your left, look right and have an accident in your pants. It's Mohc, the Dark Trooper project leader, in a pretty jazzed up version of the Dark Trooper suit which makes him nearly as hard as he thought he already was. Disabusing him of the notion is difficult but not impossible (extra lives do help). When Mohc's toasted, go back through the door he came out of, open the door at the other end of the chamber and get to the shuttle bay.

Now sit back, relax and enjoy the view as the Arc Hammer winds up in small, incandescent pieces.



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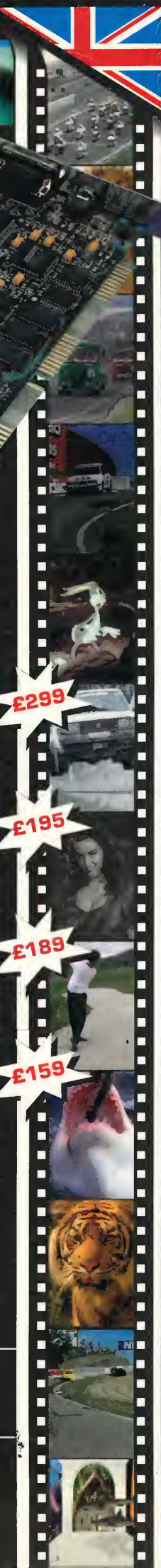
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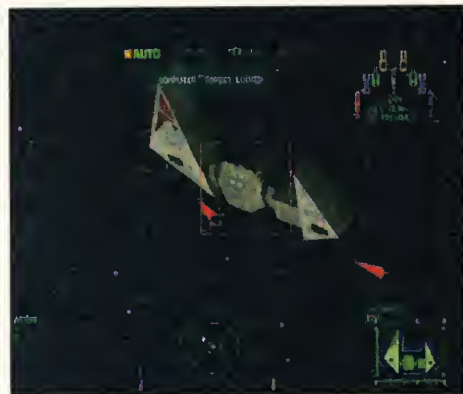
Short TIPS

WING COMMANDER III

Like to score a few easy points in Wing Commander III, care of Johnny Ryan of Dublin? Yes? Here goes...

Access the options menu during the flight ([alt]=[o]) and switch collisions 'off' and invulnerability 'on'. Now carry on and fly your mission as usual until you meet an enemy carrier.

Let your wingman cover you while you use your afterburner to get close to the carrier and then fly in through its landing tunnel. Once you are inside, and assuming most of its fighters haven't launched, there should be a load of fighters parked in the dock. Destroy the ships now that they are defenceless and when you exit, destroy the carrier. On arriving back at the TCS Victory, your kill board will show the fighters as well as the carrier itself.



DARK FORCES

Just a couple of juicy cheats for LucasArts' well of loveliness, Dark Forces.

LAPOSTAL: An absolute must-have cheat — this gives you all the weapons as well as plenty of ammunition and energy

LARANDY: Gives you a 'weapon supercharge'. You'll love the way that Imperial troopers suddenly find your blaster a rather intimidating weapon

LAIMLAME: For those of you unfamiliar with the North American idiom, 'lame' is 'pathetic'. Yes, that's right, it's invulnerability time

LAREDITE: Freezes opponents

LAPOGO: Height checking off. Leap tall buildings with a single bound

LABUG: Insect mode. Enter tight spaces and become invulnerable to all weapons except a rolled up newspaper. (Enter tight spaces anyway.)

LAUNLOCK: Full inventory. Ice cleats, breathing mask, enough bread for a sandwich when you come home from the pub...

LASKIP: End current level. Then the next one probably, and the next. You've forked out all that money for a great game and then can't be bothered to play it properly. I don't know, young people today



RISE OF THE TRIAD

Since, ROTT can be tougher than six month old roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, you might appreciate some sneaky, cheaty style help.

SLACKER: Boosts your energy by a set amount, but try not to get killed while you're typing it in. (This tends to happen since you're usually in a tight corner when you decide to succumb to the desire to cheat.)

Better still:

To enable the cheat mode type **DIPSTICK** (no silly remarks please) and then the following:

CHOJIN Immortal

TOOSAD God mode

SIXTOYS Lots of stuff, if you see what I mean

WHACK Hmmmm...

SHOOTME Bullet-proof armour

GOARCH Skip the level. Are you a man or a small mammal?

BONES Wall of flame

RECORD Record a demo

RIDE Missile camera — relive those Gulf War moments

STOP Stop a demo

PLAY Play a... you get the general idea





SYNDICATE

Oh my! Yet another budget cheat-a-thon. Enter the following company names to avoid all that nasty 'playing the game properly' stuff.

COOPER TEAM Awards you a full Cryo chamber, complete with all modifications, equipment, weapons and \$100 million that you really don't deserve

DO IT AGAIN Press CTRL and C, simultaneously, to complete a level

NUK TEAM Dead agents are immediately resurrected

ROB A BANK \$100 billion!

TO THE TOP Select any mission



FLASHBACK

An oldie at a budget price, here are the level codes. So, no more excuses then.

Easy

JAGUAR
COMBEL
ANTIC
NOLAN
ARTHUR
SHIRYU
RENDER

Normal

BANTHA
SHIVA
KASYK
SARLAC
MAENOC
SULUST
NEPTUN

Hard

TOHOLD
PICOLO
FUGU
CAPSUL
ZZZAP
MANIAC
NOWAY

TRANSPORT TYCOON

Has it ever struck you as rather unfair, as well as incredibly frustrating, that you can't destroy your opponents' roads (I mean, what's wrong with a bit of industrial espionage?). It's easy! Next time you want to cause grief and mayhem with your enemy's tarmac, try building a railway line over it and then rip it up. Hey presto, road works at nine O'clock!

SLIPSTREAM

Type refinery on the main screen. Oh, you want to know why, do you? Well how about being able to race on every track and having more money than an ex-employee of Barings Bank, which you can then invest in all sorts of hardware aimed at ensuring that your opponents don't have a chance. Is that a good enough reason?

PC REVIEW

On-line

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In Get Serious this month we test four of the newest Pentiums on the market. Plus we test a new animation package, a printer utility, and the latest shareware releases.

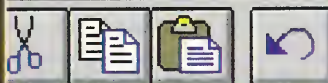
Andy Leaning

THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

PC Review gives marks out of ten to hardware and software tested. The score takes into account ease of use, performance, reliability, documentation, and support from the supplier. Below six should be regarded as highly suspect, below eight usable but flawed, eight is recommended but not perfect, nine and 10 are must-haves, the best of their class.

High Lights

File Edit View



Smart Sketch 106

MPEG Card 107

QuickTax 108

Dictionaries 113

Pentium



Dan Ultimate

Dan has a reputation for putting together some very high quality goods at reasonable prices. Like most of the IBM systems, the DAN system too is built like a Sherman tank and runs faster than a Judge Dread Lawmaster on full afterburner.

Externally, the DAN system looks pleasing and is easy to use, while internally the computer is a dream for anyone who opens it up. Wiring is neatly tucked away and the chips, expansion slots, and drive bays are easy to get at and surrounded by plenty of room too. Like the others seen here it features a Triton chipset for better integration between the PCI bus and Pentium, and has EDO RAM.

For performance, design and build the Dan Ultimate cannot be faulted. An excellent package all round.

Price: £2707

Contact: 0181 830 1100

Performance: 8

Overall: 8



Gateway Elite

The Gateway model came as a bit of surprise. Given the number of systems Gateway sell we expected it to come out tops. In reality it didn't do as well as expected. Performance-wise for example, there's nothing exciting about this Pentium it being a mite slower than the Dan and Dell models.

The styling on the exterior is very pleasing to the eye, but internally it's a wee bit messy. Furthermore, it uses non-standard components (an EnSonic sound card instead of a true Sound Blaster and an ATI GX Mach graphics card rather than Diamond Stealth). A strong point of the system however is its quad-speed CD drive capable of holding three CDs at once — very nice.

Its manual is impressive, but this isn't enough to make this a winner, although it's certainly not a loser either.

Price: £2499

Contact: 0800 202000

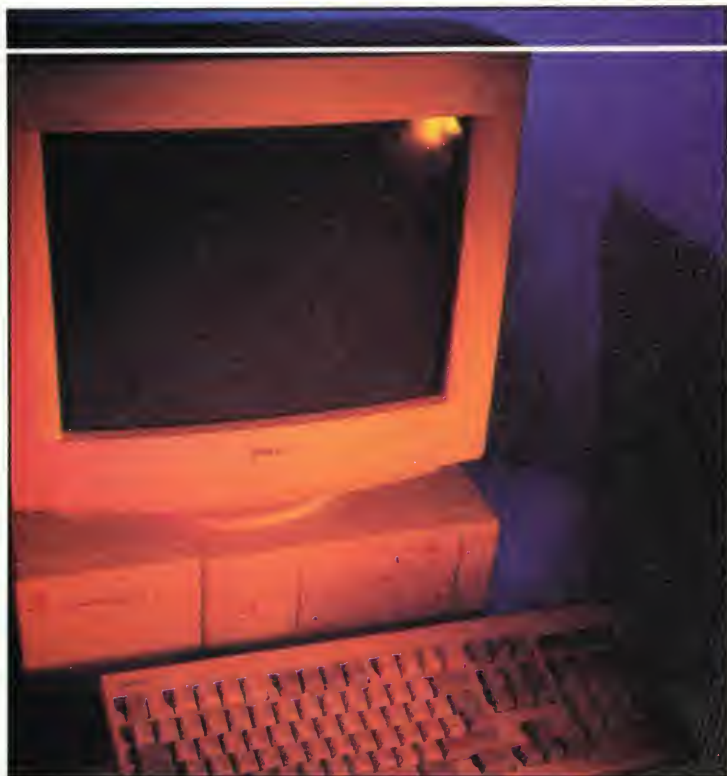
Performance: 7

Overall: 6

Pentium P120 PCs: Group Test

Power

Martin Klimes wanted a new Pentium. Do a round-up for us and you can have four of them we said — we didn't mention they had to come back afterwards...



Dell

The Dell system was one of the fastest systems in this group test.

Like the others it supported the Triton chipset, with EDO RAM (16Mb supplied) and EIDE hard drive interface. Internally it was spacious and could easily be upgraded with plenty of room to get in and move cables and expansions around.

One strong point of the Dell system was the build quality. The words 'rock' and 'solid' spring to mind when looking at it, and we have no doubts that this unit could withstand an awful lot of jolts and other bangs that home PCs get exposed to.

In performance terms it fell just short of beating the Dan model, but don't let this put you off, if you don't like the Dan model for any reason the Dell pentium is a bloody good second choice.

Price: TBA

Contact: 0500 500111

Performance: 8

Overall: 7

IBM — Big Blue bites back

If you fancy getting away from the standard PC architecture that these systems offer, then an IBM Aptiva may be the off-peak season ticket needed. We looked at a Pentium P90, a slightly cheaper option which is suitable if your pocket doesn't stretch to full P120 price.

For your money you'll get a system that's built like a tank — so build quality isn't a problem. You'll also have the advantage of getting a slightly unusual system. Cabling is non-standard, the mouse and monitor are IBMs own design, and even the software is different — forget Windows and say a big hello to OS/2 Warp, made surprisingly enough by IBM.



▲ Big and solid. IBM's system offers a lower-priced alternative to Pentium120 systems.



Viglen

On first examination, we had high hopes for the Viglen. On spec it should have been just as fast as the others; it's got all the bells and whistles with 256Kb of cache, EDO RAM, and a mode 4 EIDE hard drive. Sadly however performance wasn't impressive, neither was the build quality. The way in which the system is assembled isn't ideal either. The wiring is messy and its internals are a bit cramped, making the process of installing new cards and expansions difficult. Generally speaking, it's not impressive.

In performance terms the Viglen came out as one of the slower systems in the test, which was unfortunate. Given the pricing of systems from other manufacturers like Carrera, seen last month, we advise you shop around before checking out the Viglen model.

Price: £2853

Contact: 0181 858 7000

Performance: 6

Overall: 5

Alternatives

In last months issue we took a close look at one of the first 120MHZ Pentiums on the market, the Carrera P120. At £2275 this machine offered great speed, superb performance and plug-in-and-play ease-of-use. Overall, the Carrera is a very close match to the Dan, and is certainly similarly specified. It provides very good value for money, but when you're spending this money you want something better looking. Well worth a look if you want raw, uncensored speed.



DISK ONLY

Price: £99.95

Supplier: Franklin Quest

Contact: (0500) 223 523

The fully-networking and bonding PC Review team learn all about how to prioritise (and pigs might fly)...

American's are obsessed with time management. The better you manage your time, their mantra goes, the more you'll achieve and the better a person you'll be as a result. Personal Information Managers (PIMs for short) are the result of this thinking. They work on the simple basis that your life can be broken down into objectives, goals or tasks and by careful management of these you can do more — and what better way to manipulate such lists and documents than on a PC?

There are now many PIM applications available for Windows: Lotus Organiser and Time Manager being just two of the more notable ones. Ascend from Franklin Quest has long been one of the more powerful packages of this type, and has now undergone a major upgrade. Before looking at the new release it's probably worth taking a quick look at its predecessor.

Ascend works on a modular basis, with a row of buttons allowing you to select the module you wish to work in at any one time. There are modules for editing and maintaining a task list — so you can prioritise your work, an appointment scheduler, address and phone book, journal and jotter pads, and a values and goals system. This last option allows you to establish a series of long-term aims and objectives and helps you work towards achieving them.

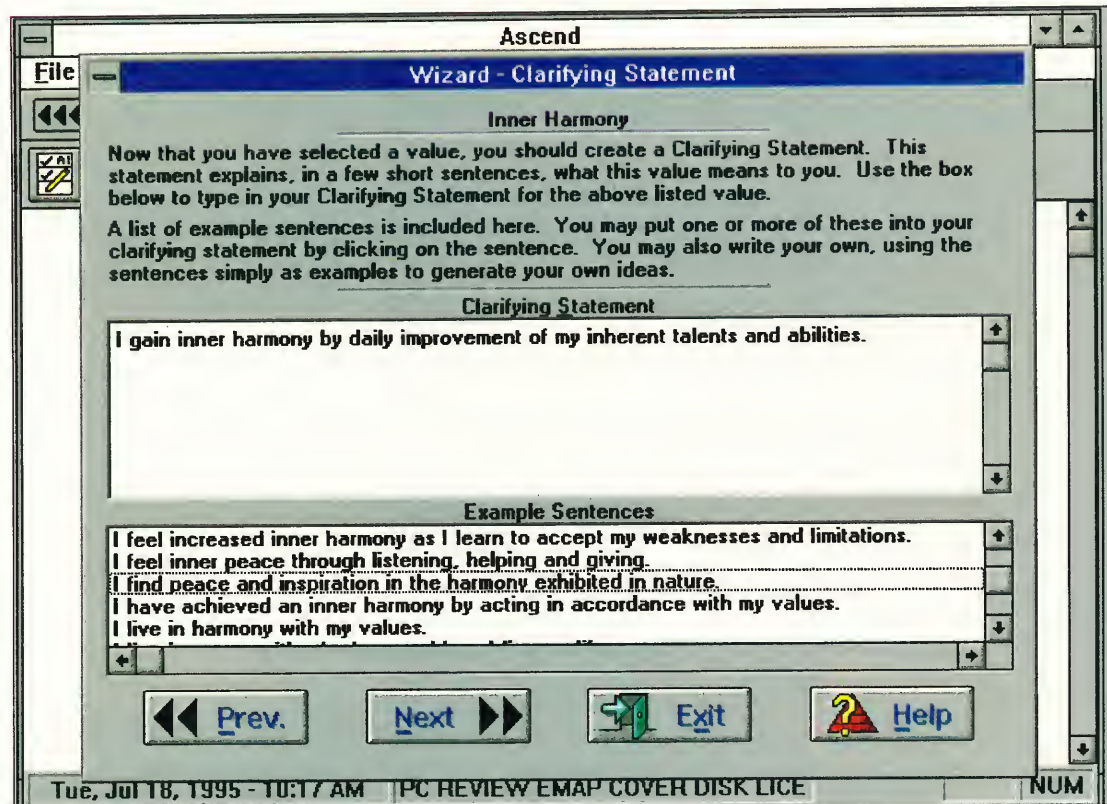
Version 5 builds on these modules adding further capabilities, including email facilities via Lotus cc:Mail or MS Mail, a comprehensive contact manager to record your outgoing and incoming calls, multiple user scheduling so you can plan meetings when everyone is free, and a utility program. This utility,

COVER DISK COMPADRE



Version 4 is on this month's cover CD. More info on page 16.

Ascend V5



▲ The Goals wizard, takes you through creating long term goals and objectives in a simple step by step manner.

▼ The bright colours of Ascend 4's toolbar icons have been replaced with more delicate pastel shades.



unlike the previous version, makes it wonderfully simple to back up data with a new graphic front end, and there's a new password option here, too.

In addition to these new features the overall user interface has been greatly improved. It looks smarter, with the garish colours replaced with more subtle tones, and is now easier to navigate around. In particular the address and phone book has been completely overhauled and are now far easier to work



▲ In version 5 you can record details of all incoming and outgoing faxes/calls and even have entries added to the task list.

with. Printing too has been improved, with the ability to preview pages and select different printers for different types of report. And the values and goals module now has a wizard walk through prompting you for information, giving examples and help where necessary — something in itself that was desperately needed!

So....

Overall Version 5 is a far, far better program than its predecessors. Its user interface and address book and phone interfaces are just so easy to use, while the values and goals wizard simplifies what can otherwise be a chore. In the end, however, you'll only get out what you put in; the more effort you make to enter and keep its data up to date, the more Ascend version 5 will be able to help you. If you already use Ascend 4.0 or are looking for a strong, well-thought-out PIM check this out — this personal organiser comes highly recommended.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Personal organiser

System requirements:

Any PC capable of running Windows 3.1, and a hard drive with 8Mb of free space.

Ease of use:

Logical, but not obvious and in some places confusing.

Performance:

No slouch, you won't be left tapping your fingers.

Value for money:

Very reasonable, especially when you consider how much you'll lose out if you otherwise waste your own time.

8

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dan Multimedia

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dan
technology plc

SmartSketch

Price: £49.95

Manufacturer: CGS

Contact: (0181) 6797307

SmartSketch is a budget-priced vector art program — and anyone, even Charles Hathaway, can draw things with it...

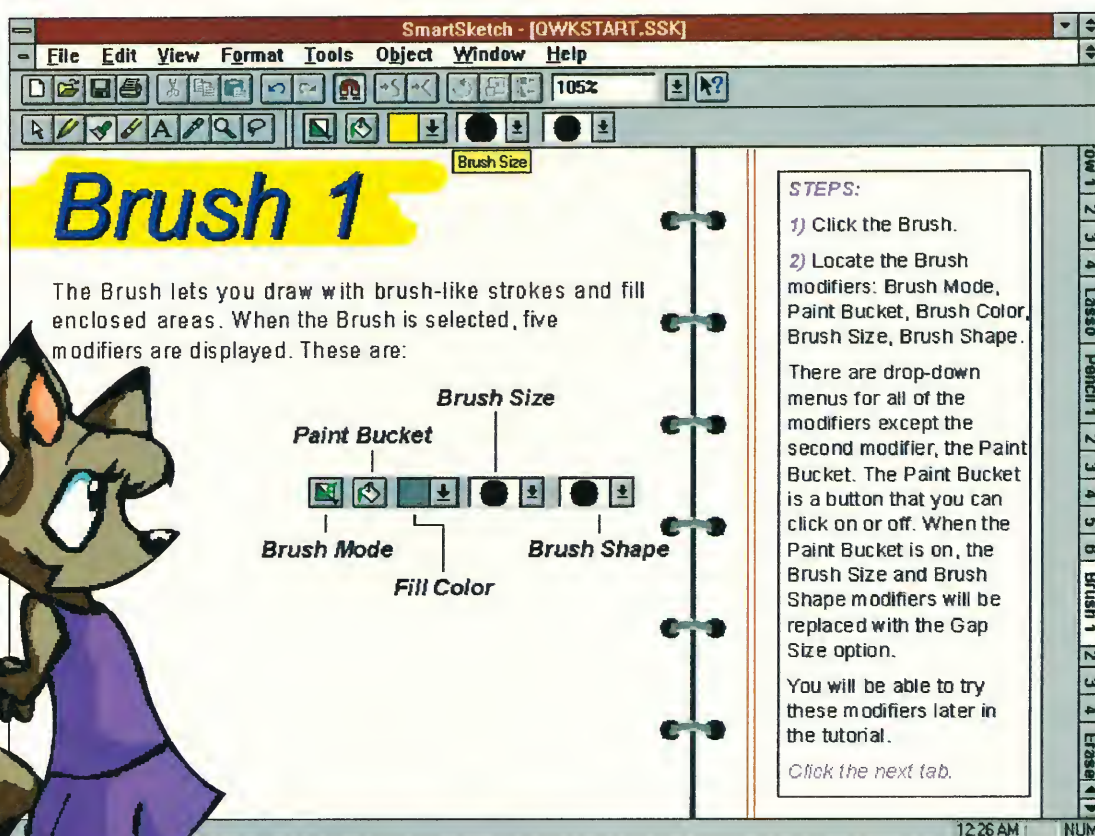
This is the Rolf Harris of drawing packages: everything looks like child's play then you realise a) it could gain a cult following and b) just how clever and commercial it really is. To draw with SmartSketch all you have to know is the how your mouse works. Blisteringly simple, eh? Because SmartSketch so refreshingly different program it demystifies vector art and lets you build it up using a combination of drag and drop from a library of 600 colour objects and some easy-to-use drawing tools.

Vector objects can be treated like vectors — reshaped, stretched, rotated or even pulled apart — or like bitmaps. You can resize and distort and object and then erase part of it just as if it were a bit image. And either way the object retains its clean vector appearance without any jagged edges.

All tooled up

Some of the tools included in this paint package are nothing short of brilliant and would be next to impossible to find in many other programs. Imagine this. You switch on automatic shape recognition and draw a rough square on the page. SmartSketch turns it into a perfect square for you. You then click on the paintbrush and fill it with a chosen colour. Now, by selecting the paint inside brush, you can add further colours without going over the edges. Once you've done that, you can rub part of it out, reshape it or move it anywhere you like. It really is quite staggering.

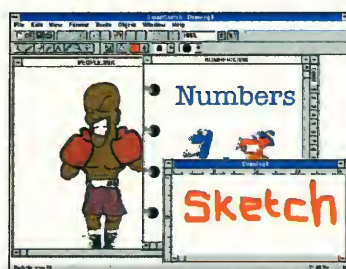
Along with its wide selection of drawing tools is a comprehensive collection



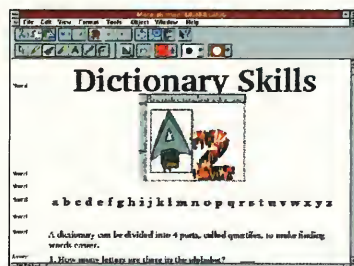
▲ The lessons are simple and easy to follow.

of tutorials, examples and help systems.

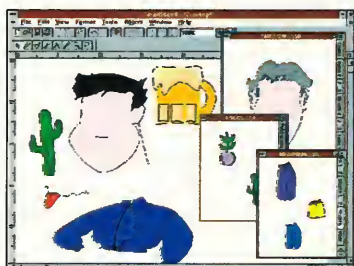
Other tools include a lasso option to cut and paste, smart fills for overlapping objects, Windows OLE 2 capability and import or export in Adobe Illustrator, WMF or DXF formats. If your artwork needs a little oomph, SmartSketch might just be the pep pill that it needs.



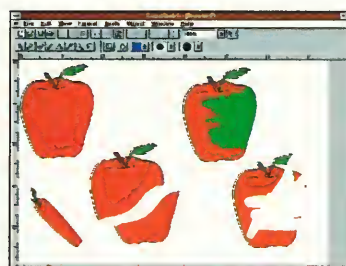
▲ SmartSketch comes with 600 clipart items which you can use to build up your own pictures.



▲ Place the picture in a Word document and click on it to edit it without leaving the program.



▲ All operations are drag and drop. Place a graphic on the page drag it to the desired location.



▲ Vector drawings can be edited as bitmaps. Paint out a part just like you would with Paintbrush.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Software drawing package

System requirements:

386 with 4 Mb RAM
(486 recommended)

Ease of use:

It's hard to see how it could be easier...

Performance:

Most operations are quick though complex drawings take time.

Value for money:

Excellent, the package allows you to draw like a pro for the price of a game — absolutely great stuff.

8

Price: £350.00

Manufacturer: CD Vision

Contact: (0171) 240 7764

Isla Claire thought she could live without MPEG until she was finally seduced by CD Vision's great big package.

Here's a novel idea. Rather than bundling some free software with an MPEG card in order to woo the punters, why not sell 300 quid's worth of video CDs and give away the MPEG card free? That's the approach CD Vision has taken.

The 'free' MPEG card is Ace Multimedia's Movie Master Classic, a cut-down version of the outstanding Movie Master 24. Both cards are capable of playing full-frame MPEG movies at 24-bit resolution, which equates to 16.7 million possible colours, and both conform to White Book standard. The Classic lacks its big brother's frame grabbing abilities, but this isn't such a

disadvantage if all you want is to watch Video CDs. And that is precisely what the Classic is good at.

The video is excellent, and very stable. Every so often it would freeze during playback, but it won't crash the entire machine and you simply have to restart the movie rather than rebooting your PC from scratch.

One of the Classic's chief advantages

is that it's easy to install. It simply slots into your PC and the software sets it up, rather than mucking about with IRQs for hours. In addition, it's very compact at just under half-length, and will fit into a standard ISA slot.

◀ **The Movie Master Classic is a compact board which produces good quality images and doesn't fall over too often. What more do you need?**



▲ **The software included in the three different packs is certainly varied, and at least you won't be stuck for something to watch when you've installed your MPEG card.**

And what of the software? The Ultimate MPEG Pack comes in three different flavours: the Movie Pack (containing 17 movies including Four Weddings and a Funeral), the Family Pack (17 good natural history titles), and the Entertainment Pack (which also includes Four Weddings, educational titles, music videos and cartoons, amongst others). In addition, all contain three good multimedia titles.

Overall this is a decent package and is reasonable value for money.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Hardware

System requirements:

CD-ROM drive, soundcard, Windows 3.1

Value for money:

Impressive, loads of video CDs and MPEG card to boot.

7

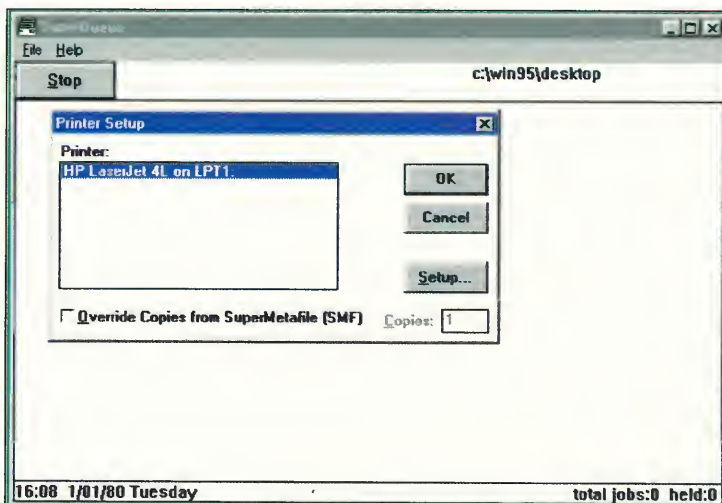
Super Queue

Please don't wait here for your print outs, Andy Leaning's jumping the Queue...

It's like a darned good bodice ripper – except that you can't read it on a beach, of course. But once you've picked it up you can't put it down...

SuperQueue is a small, simple, not-to-be-without program that sits between applications and the printer, replacing the normal Windows Print Manager. Why, you're probably asking, would you want to replace the Print Manager? As anyone who has used it will testify, the standard PrintManager is okay, but not exactly a speed demon. It can often be minutes before it finishes its job and lets you get back to work. On the other hand, with SuperQueue things are much, much, faster.

In quick tests SuperQueue finished and allowed us to get back to work four



DISK ONLY

Supplier: BIT UK

Contact: (01420) 83811

Price: £24.95

to 15 times faster than PrintManager – not bad! We found the biggest differences on complex or large picture files, with SuperQueue finishing in about six to 12 seconds compared with three and four minutes for Microsoft's program.

But this is only one advantage of SuperQueue. Another major plus is that you can send a whole load of documents to the queue program for printing later. You can even turn off the PC and come back later on to resume printing.

In all SuperQueue is a great utility for any PC user and well worth having if you've got a printer. Recommended.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Printer utility

System requirements:

Any Windows 3.1 PC

Value for money:

Great value for money and far, far cheaper than a new printer.

8

QuickTax'95

CD ONLY

Price: £49.95

Publisher: Intuit

Contact: (0800) 585058

It's an awful day for Charles Hathaway's accountant. You see, QuickTax is cheaper...

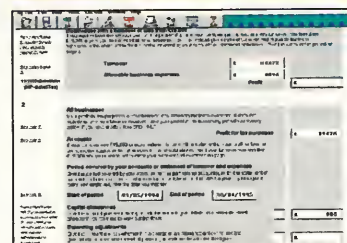
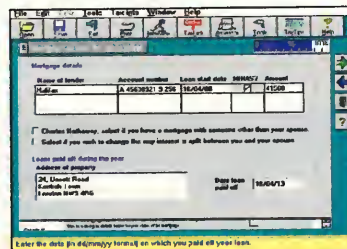
Spare a thought for anyone who gets a tax return at some point or other — most of us usually get confused! And, if you have spare time earnings or complicated investments, it can be a real chore (one could even say *taxing!* — Andy. Yes, but please don't — Ed). Most people struggle to fill them in themselves, but often pay more than they need to or get it wrong. QuickTax is a compromise, making paperwork easy without the expensive of an accountant.

I'll have a "P" please Bob, because QuickTax works like a quiz — it asks questions and you answer them, filling in the numbers as you go along. If you're unsure, help dialogues will sort out the problems. The assessor then tells you what your tax liability is or will be and the program covers all the obscure aspects of taxation like offshore accounts, investments, alimony and all

the personal and married person's allowances. It even calculates the self-employed person's NI contributions. The built-in auditor checks for errors, spurious amounts or contentious answers and the final review will check for omissions. There's also a Quicken import feature — if you've used Quicken (see last month's review) to do your accounts for the tax period, it will do your return in no time at all. Brilliant!

Better still there is a scenario builder to let you try "what if..." situations — who should claim which allowance and so on. Once a tax return is created it can be viewed on-screen (it's identical to the official IR one), and changes can be made and finally printed for sending off.

QuickTax has a nice interface, although in places the on-screen presentation could have been better. But on the whole, this is a cheap and efficient way of submitting a tax return.



▲ The completed tax return can be viewed on screen or printed out and sent to the IR.

Income tax: 34,702.41	Income tax: 34,702.41
Income tax: 2.86	Income tax: 2.86
Income tax: 222.95	Income tax: 222.95
Income tax: 179.32	Income tax: 179.32
Income tax: 427.55	Income tax: 427.55
Income tax: 17.85	Income tax: 17.85
Income tax: 402.20	Income tax: 402.20
Income tax: 40.04	Income tax: 40.04
Income tax: 40.04	Income tax: 40.04
Income tax: 25.00	Income tax: 25.00
Income tax: 25.00	Income tax: 25.00
Income tax: 383.17	Income tax: 383.17
Income tax: 105.30	Income tax: 105.30
Income tax: 47.30	Income tax: 47.30
Income tax: 18.00	Income tax: 18.00
Income tax: 40.00	Income tax: 40.00
Income tax: 33,212.33	Income tax: 33,212.33

▲ Quicken users can import data with just a couple of mouse clicks.

◀ You'll need all your paperwork handy for the interview, of course.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Accounts package

System requirements:

Any PC running Windows

Value for money:

"Dear Mr accountant, you can kiss my custom goodbye..."

6

ten out of ten... French

CD AND DISK

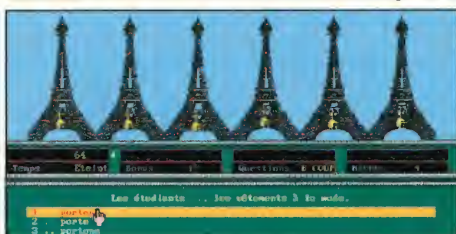
Price: £25.95

Publisher: Software Partners

Contact: (0113) 239 4627

It's the return of St Trinians, and who's the saucy new French mistress? Sue James...

Get an answer right and you have the chance to play with an insect. Mmm...



What does it promise? French without tears? Knowing your oignons? Fun and games while you expand your vocabulary — without making a faux pas?

Actually, my first impression of this package wasn't good. It looks and feels too old hat, using trivial games that don't seem appropriate to the ages of target audience (secondary school children). But on testing it I found, to my surprise, that it does work. After only half-an-hour using the program Sam, aged 11, whose first ever French lesson will be in a couple of weeks from now, had picked up at least half a dozen useful words ranging from the obvious — la table, through the ones you could be expected to guess — la salle de classe to the ones that he would not otherwise have picked up.

The target age is older, but for an 11-year-old this shoot 'em up is the business.

The program works using a series of games to educate while having fun. Unfortunately while the academic level can be changed, the games are fixed. There are six games in all and on the whole they appeal more to the under 12s than older kids. This is unfortunate, given that the educational content (French words and phrases from simple vocabulary to GCSE level) is supposed to be for Key Stages 3 and 4, which is children aged 11 to 16.

This irritating limitation, combined with equally irritating sound effects, ruins what is at heart a potentially good program. If the student falls into the right age group it can be quite good, it's just a pity the games aren't aimed at wider audiences and can't be changed.

The menu and the playing instructions can be either in French or English.



PCR VERDICT

Category:
Language tutor

System requirements:

386 with VGA graphics

Value for money:

Concept — six points, but execution — absolutely nil points. Sorry!

4



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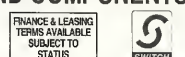
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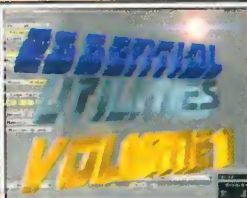
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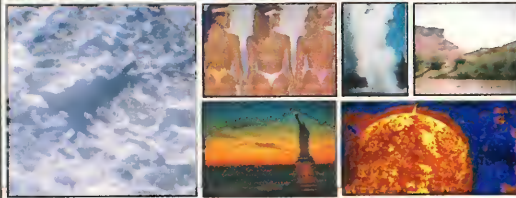
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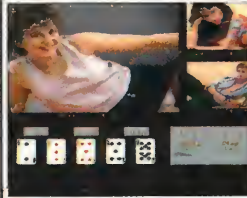
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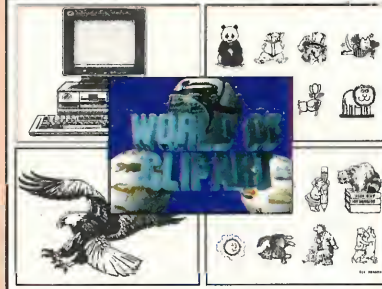
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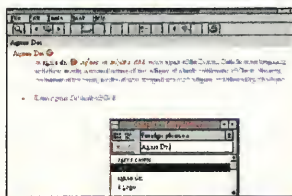
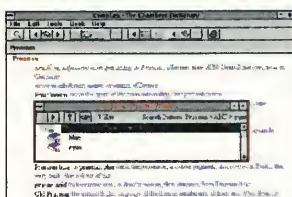
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Paul Breeze checks out three on-line dictionaries, erm, dictionaryes, hang on, ah yes, that's it, dictionaries.

Spell czeching

pants pants , n pl knickers or underpants; trousers (esp Nam); none of the products reviewed here; being bombarded by the technical editor's puns.

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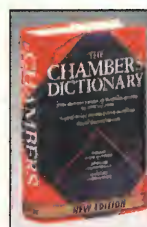
VERDICT

8

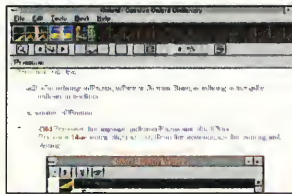
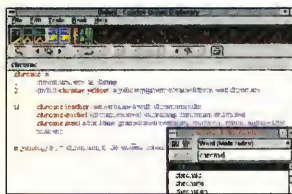
The Chambers Dictionary zooms into the digital age with this well-respected dictionary and reference work. It's chock-a-block (alt. **chock-full** or **choke-full**) with 215,000 cross-references, plus the dictionary has been brought to Windows using AND Software's CompLex interface, providing silky-smooth presentation. And by way of a bonus it can be linked directly into Microsoft Word 6 as well as Word for Windows.

The content of the Chambers Dictionary is excellent and in the electronic version Chambers has seized the chance to spell out the abbreviations that litter the book version, making it much simpler to consult.

The key to ease-of-use of an electronic dictionary is in its indexes and this has six: headwords, the full text, capitalised words, foreign phrases, idiomatic phrases and keywords. A word or phrase search can be carried out on any one of these. Fuller, Boolean searches, for more complex enquiries, can be performed on all but the keyword index. A search for entries containing the words Prussian and pigment – I was searching for the dye Prussian blue – yielded three separate entries. (The massive Oxford English Dictionary found 12 entries during a similar exercise.)



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VERDICT

7

The Oxford Compendium from Oxford University Press combines four books, The Concise Oxford Dictionary, The Oxford Thesaurus, The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations and The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Quotations on a single CD. Like Chambers, it uses the AND Software interface and comes with a link to Word for Windows.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary contains 120,000 entries and 190,000 definitions. There are two indexes, the main index and the full text which can be searched for single words or using a Boolean search system. The Boolean search will also cover any other books that are loaded. The test search for entries containing both the words Prussian and blue revealed a single entry here.

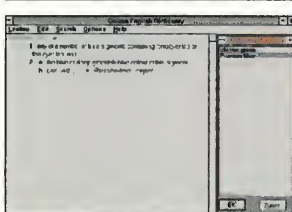
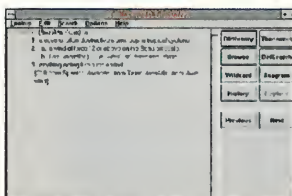
The content of the electronic version of the Concise Oxford Dictionary follows closely the style of the book. This can be terse at times but is, nevertheless, effective. Anyone familiar with the book version will soon begin to feel at home with this product.

HOW BIG?

Supplier	Chambers	Oxford	Collins
Hard Drive Size*	20Mb	19Mb	10Mb
Dictionary Definitions	300,000	120,000	190,000

All three offer cut down installation, loading data from CD-ROM or removing part of the data. The winner is Chambers, which found the most entries in our test while having the lowest price.

COLLINS ELECTRONIC DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS (VERSION 1.5)



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Price: £69.33
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Electronic Reference
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VERDICT

8

The Collins Electronic Dictionary and Thesaurus provides its reference works on both floppy disk and CD-Rom, and both DOS and Windows installation is from the same box. The DOS and Windows interfaces are both straightforward and effective.

The dictionary contains 190,000 definitions and the Thesaurus 275,000 synonyms. There are also separate pronunciation and etymology modules. Dictionary and Thesaurus can be searched alone for single words, or both can be searched using a more complex enquiry. A test search for entries containing the two words Prussian and pigment here produced two results, Prussian Blue and Chrome Green. The search procedure, however, took roughly four times as long as similar searches using the AND Software interface of Oxford and Chambers, there's also an anagram search – great for crosswords.

There are automatic links between the Collins Dictionary and WordPerfect for Windows 6.0a and WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS. The DOS version can be used to pop-up over the top of a word processor.

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Major: Let's machine-gun them all in the face



Major - didn't actually say any of the stuff below, but what the heck!

PRIME Minister John Major warned the Commons today that the ludicrously teeny prices charged for 2nd user PC games at London's Computer Exchange could lead to economic ruin for the rest of Britain.

"Oh yes", he whined, "they've got PC games starting at £5. There's an unvalued selection on offer - always the latest titles available - and all at damned low prices. When people exchange their games towards other ones it works out even cheaper. Just what the hell do they think they're doing?"

Mr. Major then called on all British citizens to rise up as one and join him on a military assault on the Computer Exchange's London HQ.

"Anyone interested in signing up should pop down to their local police station. We'll give them a gun, ammunition, four grenades, and a baseball cap with the word 'KILL' printed on it."

Oh, alright then. He didn't say anything of the sort. Sorry.

PC "SATISFIED MY EVERY NEED" SAYS BIG-JUGS PAM

EXCLUSIVE by CALVIN DONKEYKONG Jnr

BUSTY Pamela Ambersol, star of ITV's "Babewatch", yesterday heaped praise on the tip-top, one-stop, no-slop PC haven that is London's Computer Exchange yesterday.

Pam, 27, recently purchased a PC from the Computer Exchange's Hardware Department, and was overjoyed. "I couldn't believe it", she gasped over her absurd bosom, "a tailor-made PC with the exact specs I required - at a price so low it defies all human logic and understanding."

CEX (the Computer Exchange PC brandname) PC's are fully guaranteed and can be upgraded in the blink of an eye. And shucks, that's not all.

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2nd-user 486 processor, starting at £20? Just call (0171) 916 3110 for details on today's bargains. Everything sold is fully guaranteed as well. So there.

You can even part-exchange your current hardware towards an altogether meatier setup - by far the cheapest way to upgrade - or simply sell it for a handful of hard cash.

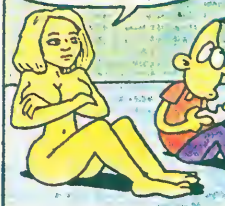
Pamela Ambersol's done it - why the HELL don't you? Goddammit!



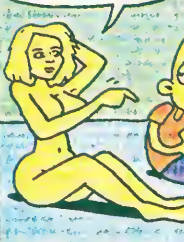
Pam: More silicon in her chest than Intel have ever seen.

TOBY AND LYNNE

TOBY: ARE YOU GOING TO PLAY WITH THAT THING ALL NIGHT LONG?



WOULDN'T YOU RATHER PLAY WITH ME?



OH... ALRIGHT THEN



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Autodesk Animator Studio

If Walt Disney were around, he'd quake in his boots. Probably. Pat Fox gets animated.

Let's not beat around the bush, here — if you don't own a Pentium-based machine with at least 16Mb of RAM, then you might as well forget about Animator Studio straight away. This is probably the most power-hungry application we've ever used — the minimum spec might be a 486 DX2/66, but when we ran it on a DX4/100, it was completely unusable.

This is a shame, because Animator Studio, as we've come to expect from the company that brought us 3DStudio and AutoCad, is a very slick and professional product. While its name might suggest that it is aimed at 'hand-drawn' animation, it is in fact capable of manipulating FMV too, and provides facilities for assembling near-professional quality video output.

Doing it by hand

For hand-drawn animations, Animator Studio provides the usual drawing tools such as Draw and Fill, and most usefully, an 'onion skin' facility. This is the traditional technique used by animators, where each



frame of animation is drawn on a translucent sheet, which means that previous frames are still partially visible. It is a very useful feature, and well implemented.

On a more advanced level, Animator Studio also supports Image Compositing, which is the technical term for the 'blue-screening' technique. This is widely used in television, where, for example, an actor is filmed on a blue background; the blue areas are then replaced by a second image, with the result that the actor appears to be part of the background picture. This is undoubtedly the most powerful feature of the program, since you can use it to add titles, overlay several animations onto each other or produce complex crossfades and wipes. Unfortunately, such fades and transitions are not

▲ The overlay facilities allow you to create some stunning artwork by combining images.

actually directly implemented and some ingenuity is required to combine the available tools to good effect.

Fortunately, the on-line help is extremely well designed, and very in-depth. It makes up for the manual which concentrates too much on background and tutorials, but doesn't provide a reference section, so that when you forget everything you learned in the tutorial, you can't find it when you go back and look again. This should certainly be rectified in future releases.

There was little to fault in Animator Studio; it is slickly presented and easy enough to use after a bit of practice. The recommended machine specification is prohibitively high, but this just reinforces the message that this is a professional package, and not just a toy.

Price: £581.63

Manufacturer: Autodesk

Contact: (01483) 303322

The browser in Animator Studio gives you a set of colourful thumbnails so — presto — you needn't have to fumble about to find the right animation. ▼



PCR VERDICT

Category:

Application

System requirements:

486 DX2/66, with Windows 3.1 or better, VGA, 8Mb, 40Mb hard drive space

Ease of use:

Okay, if you use the system of on-line help.

Performance:

Good if you have a Pentium, but forget it if you've got anything less.

Value for money:

It's not cheap, but then it's a professional package. It'll do everything you want, if you have the hardware to use it.

8



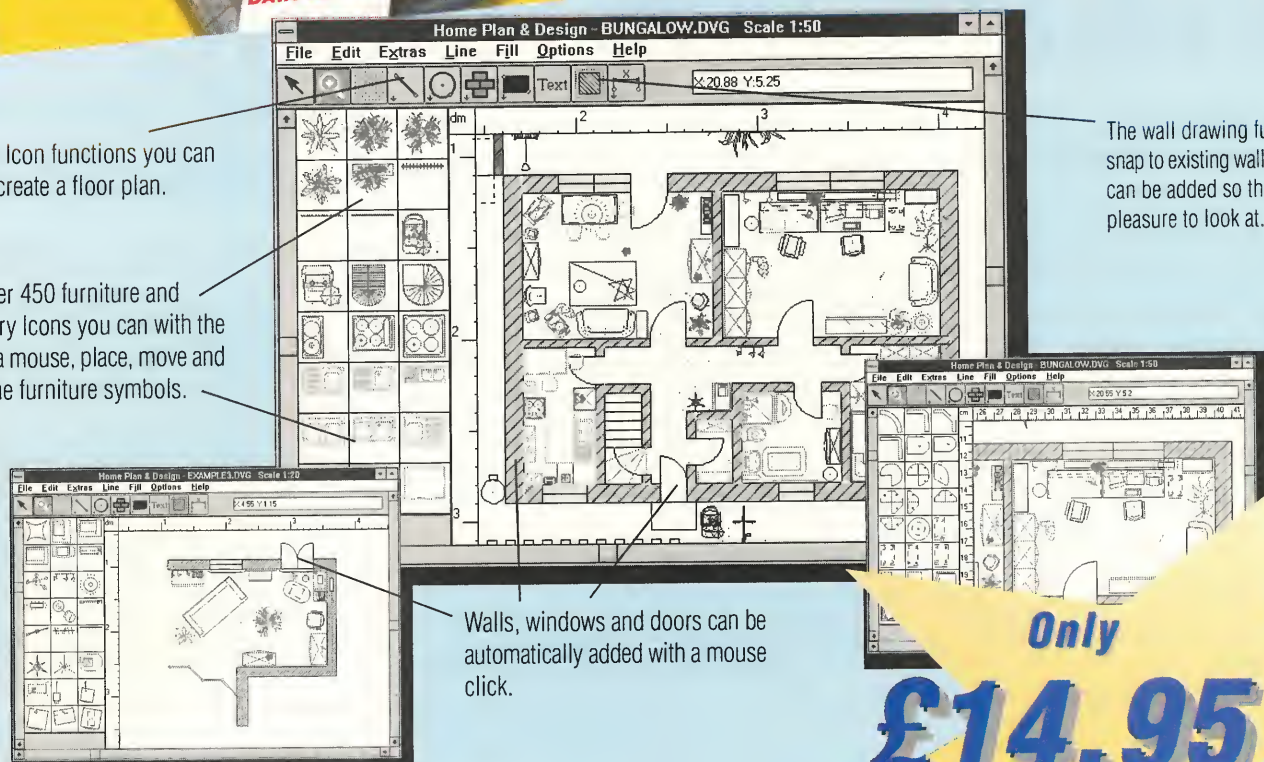
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Walls, windows and doors can be automatically added with a mouse click.

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Andy Leaning notches up his highest score ever on Missile Command, and it's all thanks to a new trackball.

Price: £39.95

Man/supplier: Golden Image

Contact: (0181) 900 9291

Trackballs are normally used for one of two things: saving your bases from missiles in Missile Command, or CAD applications — and I know which one I prefer doing! At first glance the AlfaCrystal trackball looks pretty much like any other, with a large central ball replacing the conventional mouse ball, and two buttons located just below it. Resting your index and middle fingers on the ball allows you to direct the pointer around on screen, leaving thumb and *All that glows doesn't glitter.* ►

Trackball



fourth finger free to press the buttons.

The ball action is fairly smooth and aside from this, there's not much else to say about the trackball's operation. But there is one small difference between this model and its rivals — this one glows. Or rather, that's what AlfaData claims. Apparently the ball lights up in mahogany (red) and green, but in reality things are different. The glow is created

by nothing more complex than a transparent globe with LED lights below it, which means that the effect is not so much a glow as a faint tint! It's certainly not enough to justify the extra cost.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

AlfaData/Crystal Trackball

System requirements:

Any PC with mouse interface.

Value for money:

Better trackballs are available for less cost.

5

Microsoft Home Mouse

Price: £27.00

Man/supplier: Microsoft

Contact: (01345) 002000

Microsoft has decided you need a new mouse. Andy Leaning decides he wants a less patronising peripherals stylist.

For a perfect example of a pure marketing exercise, look no further than Microsoft's Home mouse. The company has taken its best seller and redesigned it to fit more naturally into a home environment. So how has it made it home-friendly? Well, it now comes in new slate blue with angled buttons, and resembles a roof top! The overall shape has also changed; rather than curving around to the left, the Home mouse is long, rises slightly in the middle and tapers out as it reaches the base, so that it fits neatly into your hand.

In addition to changing the mouse's appearance, Microsoft has supplied a **The new Microsoft Home mouse, just forget the software and design.** ►



new driver for Windows (but which won't work under Windows '95). As well as providing the usual assortment of controls for speed and double clicking, you can change the icon used for the pointer. So, should you want to (and you'll be the first person I've come across who does), you can opt for cute little animated icons to match your pointer movement if you so desire.

Once you've got over the patronising styling of the mouse and deleted the software, the action of the mouse is rather elegant — in fact, I prefer it to the normal Microsoft mouse. Although it has a light, highly mobile feel to it, it has enough weight to be reassuring. The buttons emit a responsive click and the

flexible lead feel allows for much easier movement overall. Forget it's for the home, ignore the gimmicky software — just treat it as a normal mouse.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Microsoft Home Mouse

System requirements:

Any PC with Windows.

Value for money:

At just over £20 for a high quality mouse, it's not bad value for money.

7

Shareware

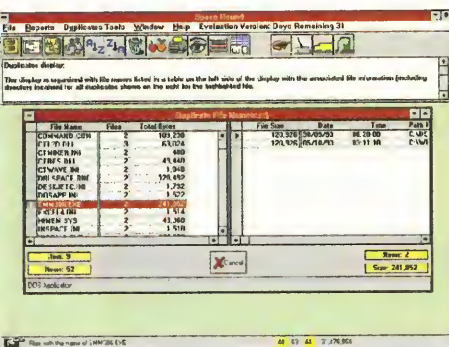
"Off with you Charles Hathaway, off to the wilderness and locusts and honey, and don't return until you're the God-like genius of shareware." He came back bearing gifts....

SPACE HOUND

When space is at a premium, there's nothing more irritating than to discover things that are unnecessarily cluttering your hard disk — so it's pretty much your onerous task to weed the buggers out. Luckily, Space Hound is a multipurpose Windows utility that 'sniffs out' space which is being wasted on your hard disk by duplicated or forgotten files. Five primary displays show you which files are duplicated, obsolete or forgotten and the program has a number of tools which take all the guess work out of determining which files fall into each category; the duplicate display is particularly useful as most Windows installations have several megabytes of space taken up by storing the same file in two or more directories. The program is so powerful that it can also be used as a file manager replacement — it has good search, copy, move and delete facilities as well as file listing, space mapping and so on.

The registered version has no nag screens and features a universal file viewer with support for over 20 different file formats, including Microsoft Word.

● **Evaluation and registered versions from Oakley Data Services on (01270) 759739 ● Price £23**



▲ Let Space Hound clear some disk space of unwanted files.

It's not bad and worth a go but you've definitely got to have a nose for what you're doing...

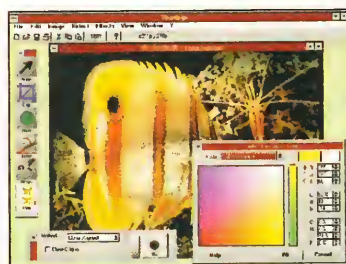
VERDICT

5

FLAMINGO

Flamingo Lite is a freeware version of a fully featured image processing program in the Paintshop Pro mould. Only GIF, BMP and PCX image files can be loaded and saved and though there's only one special effect filter, it's enough for a reasonable evaluation.

The registered version (Flamingo Plus) supports TIF, JPEG, Targa and PCD images, among others, and adds a raft of special effects filters such as motion blur, Gaussian blur, 3D distort, shear, add noise, unsharp, mask and trace contour, to name but a few. There



▲ Flamingo has a well designed interface and some nice features.

are more painting and drawing effects such as custom brushes, lightening effects and the ability to add text.

In the Lite version you can draw with one of several pencil weights and rescale, flip, rotate and crop images to your heart's content. And there's scope for even more artistic endeavours, as the program also allows you to create new images and cut and paste to make montages. But bear in mind that Flamingo is a heavyweight program and as such it needs a reasonably fast machine. However, it has an easy-to-use interface with floating toolboxes, palettes and good dialogue boxes.

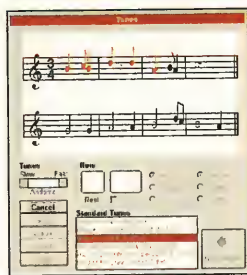
● **Evaluation and registered versions from Springsoft Publishing (01352) 770049 ● Price £49.95**

Flamingo — perhaps another heavyweight contender for Paintshop Pro's crown.

VERDICT

6

▶ **Hitting the right note with Recorder.**



RECORDER FOR WINDOWS

Almost everyone must have attempted to play the recorder at some time or other, but as everyone knows, high pitched renditions of "Little Brown Jug" are rarely appreciated.

It's important to get as proficient as possible before family and friends suffer ravaged eardrums, and as a tutorial Recorder for Windows seems to be one of the best ways of doing it. You can play the tunes with any available instrument sound rather than just the recorder.

The interface makes it suitable for all ages. There are various lessons in reading music, understanding notes and scales and specific lessons on playing the recorder itself. For the more accomplished there are quizzes and complete



tunes to play along with. The correct finger positions are displayed where relevant and there is a 'database' of all the notes for reference. And it goes without saying that the main advantage is that you don't have the gruesome task of cleaning out the instrument afterwards...

● **Evaluation and registered versions from Springsoft Publishing (01352) 770049 ● Price £29.31**

This is a wonderful recorder tutorial for would-be players of all ages.

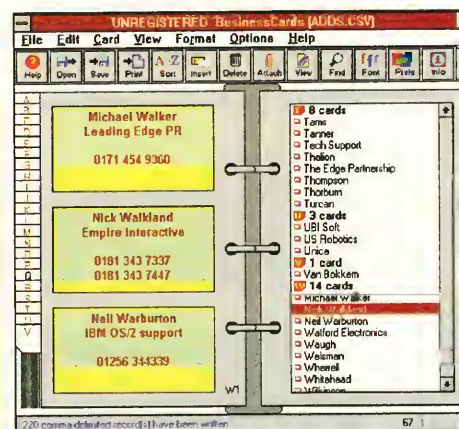
VERDICT

7

BUSINESSCARDS

BusinessCards for Windows is a colourful free-form database program. Although its main aim is to log business cards or addresses, it is also useful for keeping track of just about any type of textual information, from CD and video collections to notes and ideas.

Presentation is the key to programs like this — after all, get it wrong and nobody will want to use it — so there are no predefined forms or record layouts, BusinessCards lets you decide exactly how you want your information presented and organised. You can have



▲ To get the most from an address manager, it needs to be highly configurable yet simple to use.

two or three records per page.

These are accessed using the comfortable book-style interface and there is a configurable toolbar at the top. Files and notes can be attached to each card or entry while powerful search, print and import/export facilities combine to make this one of the most impressive address managers I've come across in a long while.

● **Evaluation version from Ensign (0181) 778 2871 ● Price £29.95**

As an address manager this is stylish and colourful, as well as easy to use.

VERDICT

7



▲ Let's Face It — cartoons with a wide range of features to choose from.

PHANTOM SCREENSAVER

If you're a Windows user, the chances are you're awash with screensavers. But if you regularly use DOS, you're unlikely to have much of a collection.

This comes from NeoSoft, the developers of NeoPaint and NeoShow, and the screensaver has a very similar look and feel. It offers the choice of a dozen or more configurable screensavers, ranging from the ubiquitous aquarium with fish, bubbles and crabs to trains, graphs and charts and a superb 'windscreen simulator' with bees squashing themselves messily on a make-believe windscreen.

● **Evaluation and registered versions from Testware Publishing (01423) 886415**
● **Price £49.95**



BEST THIS MONTH LET'S FACE IT

This is a superb little caricature program that even the most ham-handed amateurs can get to grips with in minutes. That's not to say your caricatures will be stunning, but you should have plenty of laughs along the way. Just take a look at my effort...

Essentially, it works like a vector graphics program — choose a shape and manipulate it by either resizing it, rotating it or skewing it in any direction and then add another to build up the picture you want. There's

◀ **A self portrait I prepared earlier... Now you know why you never see me on these pages!**

at least 25 of each facial feature to choose from. They can be tweaked almost ad infinitum, so there are endless possibilities. It is extraordinarily flexible, and well worth trying out. Just be careful not to offend your family and friends with the results!

● **Evaluation versions from Ensign (0181) 778 2871** ● **Price £39.95**



▲ If you want the perfect pout, try Let's Face It for size.



▲ Compushow is a flexible DOS-based graphics viewer.

COMPUSHOW 2000

Compushow is a handy little DOS image viewing utility that loads and displays colour, greyscale and monochrome image files very quickly. It works with a wide range of graphics cards and screen resolutions, selecting the optimum screen resolution and colour depth for the image it is displaying.

A good range of file formats are supported, including standard ones like GIF, IFF, TIFF, BMP and Targa, plus less widely used ones such as GEM IMG, PBM Plus, PND, MacPaint, Dr Halo, RIP icons, JPEG and the new PNG format designed to replace GIFs on bulletin boards and on-line services.

Compushow allows the option of displaying the images either as a slideshow or one at a time. During the display, all kinds of operations can be carried out effectively, from brightening and darkening the images to altering the colour palette, to increasing the RGB levels and so on. And as Compushow runs under Windows without any problems, the program can even be set up to view images directly from within the Windows file manager.

So if you're in need of a program that lets you look at images in DOS, then it's worth considering Compushow. It makes a good, flexible choice.

● **Evaluation versions from Ensign (0181) 778 2871** ● **Price £39**

Let's Chat

Shareware libraries and authors — if you've got shareware programs you'd like to see covered in these pages, please get in touch. Simply send them to: PC Review at EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Or e-mail at chatter@cityscape.co.uk.

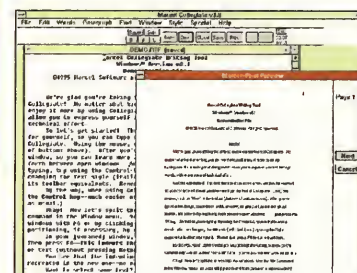
MARCEL COLLEGIATE WRITING TOOL

If you want to write a letter, you use a word processor, right? Not according to the authors of Marcel, you don't. They say this product isn't a word processor at all, instead it's a writing program aimed at professionals and students. It's dinky and easy to use and relies on the system font for rapid display of text.

In fact, it more or less ignores WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) until you come to print out your document, when you can see what's happening courtesy of the print preview. After deciding what you want your Marcel document to look like (it can be in the form of a report, a letter or a draft), simply select a font, add headers and footers and page numbers as desired and check it on screen before finally pressing the Print button.

Marcel uses Rich Text Format for easy file exchange and the registered version even comes with a Thesaurus and spell checker (American). It isn't the type of program that will appeal to everyone — most journalists I know are quite happy with cumbersome Windows word processors because of the enormous power they offer, rather than the speed and ease of use. But it could be worth trying out if your writing needs a boost.

● **Evaluation versions from Ensign (0181) 778 2871** ● **Price £19**



▲ Easy letters with the Writing Tool.

▲ The Phantom screensaver has numerous password and hot key options included in the program.

After Dark for DOS users — screensavers aren't new but this one's pure entertainment.

VERDICT

6

Okay, so it's not enough to get you a job on Private Eye but it'll give you just as good a laugh...

VERDICT

8

Works on any PC with minimal graphics support, which means it's good for DOS users.

VERDICT

6

Forget about clumsy word processors — this is ideal for quick and easy documents.

VERDICT

6

Q & A

Over the next four pages anything can happen. For all ye with conundrums of a technical nature Mike James will soothe those PC blues....

YOUR TECHNICAL ENQUIRIES ANSWERED

HEADINGS

You may be just browsing or perhaps looking for a specific solution. Either way the questions and answers are now broken down into subject types to help you find those that are relevant to you.

VIDEO

Anything relating to video and graphics hardware.

SOUND

For all those audio related conundrums.

HARDWARE

Motherboards, hard drives, BIOS and general hardware.

COMMS

For all your internet and modem questions.

MS DOS

It's messy and certainly no DOS, your C:> questions answered.

WINDOWS

General Windows enquiries.

APPS

For those enquiries about your applications software.

SOFTWARE

For utilities and anything other than big applications.

PROGRAMMING

Coding problems aired and solved.

MS DOS

Q

Most of the IBM-compatible software specifies the use of MS-DOS. Can computers that use PC-DOS run the software without any problems?

R E Fawcett
Via Internet

A

MS-DOS and PC-DOS are more or less identical — PC-DOS was just the name that IBM used for its version of the product. PC-DOS usually had some extra commands and was specifically designed to run on real IBM PCs, but any program that worked with MS-DOS would work with PC-DOS and vice versa. In the days when IBM and Microsoft were buddies there was a lot of interaction between the two versions, but these days Microsoft just seems to deliver its version of MS-DOS to IBM, who then modifies it. Given that PC-DOS isn't 100 per cent identical to MS-DOS there is scope for incompatibilities to creep in, but any big incompatibility would cause howls of protest. This said, see the next question.

SOUND

Q

The problem is the same as a recent question (Q&A, May 95) also concerning an IBM machine — with no digital sound.

We bought the computer from Time but the digital sound didn't work. We changed the soundcard from an ISP16 to a Sound Blaster 16, hoping that this would cure the fault, but alas no. We tried every combination of Address, IRQ, Low and High DMA possible and even removed the CD-ROM drive in the hope that some sort of conflict was occurring between the drive and soundcard, but still no digital sound.

We've had various computer technicians to look at the computer, but the only information they could give was that PC-DOS was somehow affecting the machine. We therefore installed MS-DOS and around 5 per cent of the software now has digital sound. Mortal Combat II has digital sound but Descent, Wing Commander III, Bio

Forge, and Pinball Fantasies still have nothing. Please can you help, any information would be useful. Has anybody else ever had this fault on an IBM Machine?

Jonathan Hall
Oldham

A

I'm very puzzled, as the only real point of difference between standard sound effects and digital sound is that the latter makes use of DMA. This stands for Direct Memory Access and it allows the soundcard to get data directly from RAM without having to bother the processor. This is needed because digital sound uses a great deal of data to create the effects you hear. As DMA is supported mostly by hardware and DOS has very little to do with it, I am at a loss to explain why changing from PC-DOS to MS-DOS should make any difference. The fact that the change doesn't completely solve the problem suggests that it isn't really the cause.

My only thought is that it could be something to do with the protected mode operation needed to provide expanded or extended memory to DOS programs. This sometimes confuses the DMA chip and makes it lose data and even crash the machine. Does anyone know more about this problem with IBM machines and PC-DOS?

HARDWARE

Q

My PC has a VL486 Mk2 motherboard currently fitted with a 486DX33, which will take a DX50, DX2-66, or (allegedly) the Pentium OverDrive chip. Now that the OverDrive chip is available...

- How does it compare speed-wise with a 486DX2-66, P60 and P90?
- What does it cost and who is the supplier?
- Does it have its own cooling fan?
- Is it a worthwhile move, bearing in mind the approach of the 'Sexium' and Win95 with its heavy system overheads?
- Is it worth waiting for a more powerful Pentium Overdrive chip.

F B Dickens
Birmingham

A

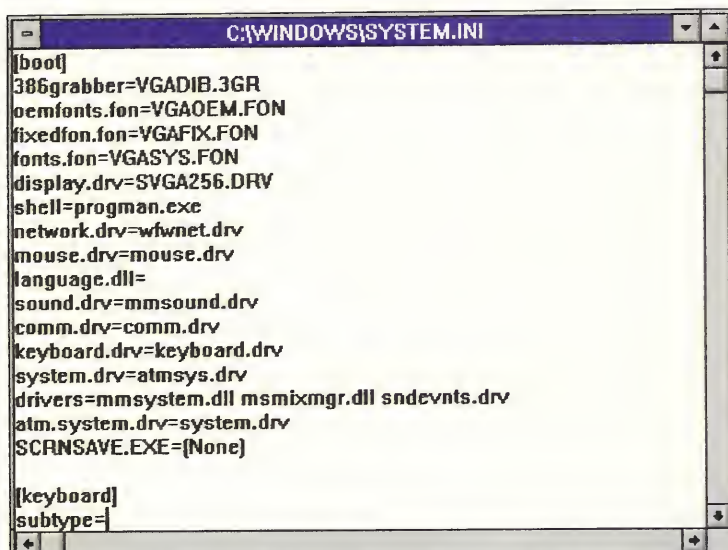
You might decide not to bother with the Pentium OverDrive because it runs about 30 per cent slower than an equivalent Pentium system. This is because the OverDrive is limited to the 486's 32-bit memory access and can't work in 64-bit chunks like a true Pentium system. Still, fitting an OverDrive chip will just about treble your existing machine's performance, but so would fitting a DX4. Fitting a DX2 would double it, so it comes down to whether you think it's worth the price. There are a number of PC Review advertisers offering processor upgrades, so look through and phone around for the latest prices — but at the moment it looks as if a Pentium OverDrive will cost around £300, DX4 around £200 and a DX2 around £130. All of these upgrade chips need a small cooling fan clipped on top of the chip — check whether it's included in the price you are offered. As to whether or not it is worth it, you'll have to make up your own mind. As to the P6, how long is a piece of string? Are you then going to wait for the P7 or whatever? There is always a better chip just around the corner! At the moment I find a 486DX2-66 to be fast enough for most tasks but it depends on the amount of RAM, speed of hard disk and speed of graphics.

SOUND

Q

While reading Dean Barnard's letter (Q&A, July 95) and your response to it, I was wondering if the problem I had with the settings of my Sound Blaster 16 MCD was the same. If so, the solution is straightforward.

I also found some games 'turned down' the volume, but after much thought and searching through the manuals, I found the answer. When you change the mixer settings using SB16SET, the changes are saved to the file CTMIX.CFG. When you boot up a game normally this information is loaded over the default settings. However, if you use a boot disk this may not happen, and therefore the default settings will be used and the volume be lower than you'd normally expect.



```

C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM.INI
[boot]
386grabber=VGADIB.3GR
oemfonts.fon=VGAOEM.FON
fixedfon.fon=VGAFIX.FON
fonts.fon=VGASYS.FON
display.driv=SVGA256.DRV
shell=progman.exe
network.driv=wfnnet.driv
mouse.driv=mouse.driv
language.dll=
sound.driv=mmsound.driv
comm.driv=comm.driv
keyboard.driv=keyboard.driv
system.driv=atmsys.driv
drivers=mmsystem.dll msmixmgr.dll sndevnts.driv
atm.system.driv=system.driv
SCRNSAVE.EXE=[None]

[keyboard]
subtype=

```

Editing System.ini is dangerous — but sometimes essential.

The solution is to add the following line towards the end of AUTOEXEC.BAT on your boot disks

C:\SB16\SB16SET /P

where /P sets the mixer according to the preset settings in the CTMIX.CFG file.

I hope this is helpful.

Martyn Westwood
Sheffield

A Yes, and it demonstrates how careful you have to be when making a 'clean' boot disk for specific programs, but by adding extras to one you lose the advantages of a clean disk.

SOFTWARE

Q I recently bought a 486SX. Unfortunately, as a new-comer to this world, I did not activate any anti-virus protection and have now contracted a virus that has disabled my computer completely. When I switch the computer on it informs me that I can't write to my hard disk or access anything.

Having now read up on virus information, I realise I should have made a boot-up disk, which I didn't do, as my machine runs PC DOS. I don't know any other user who uses this operating system and MS-DOS start-up disks seem to be of no use at all.

The virus concerned has been identified as MONKEY. I have several virus killer programs on floppy disk but I can't run anything because I can't access the computer.

Can I obtain a disk that will start up my machine and kill this virus?

Mark Rogers
London

A A virus infection is much rarer than you might think and I am not at all convinced that you have a

case. I am particularly mystified at how you have managed to identify the virus when you can't get at the hard disk! Also, the Monkey virus is a variant of the Stoned virus, which is one of the most common but it isn't supposed to lock the hard disk drive in the way that you describe.

It doesn't really matter what is causing the problem because the solution is the same. You simply have to acquire a boot-up floppy disk from somewhere. Without it you won't be able to start your machine or repair the damage. The problem is that you need the same version of MS-DOS or PC-DOS that is already on your hard disk, or you need to upgrade the hard disk to the version that you are booting with. I would suggest that if you can't find a suitable floppy then you should buy a MS-DOS 6 upgrade pack. First install the operating system to floppy disk following the instructions given. Then use this to boot your machine. Next use the command FDISK /MBR (making sure that FDISK.EXE is on the floppy) which should restore your hard disk. If it doesn't, then you probably have little choice but to format the disk, which will erase everything on it. If the disk will not format then it is certainly some sort of hardware problem — which is much more common than a virus! The only solution to this is to obtain a replacement hard disk; if it's a new machine your supplier should be able to help you out and it shouldn't be too costly.

HARDWARE

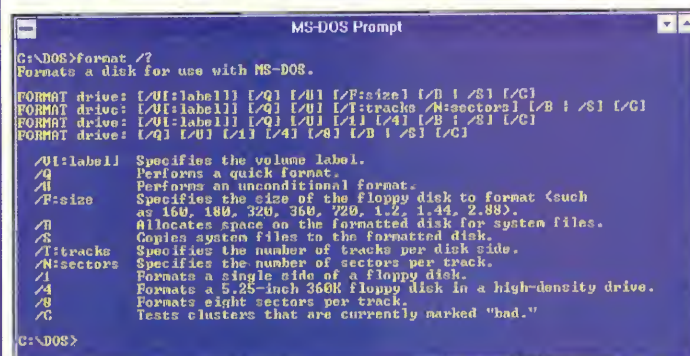
Q Can you please, please help me! When I tried to load a new game on my hard drive it replied that it needs at least 2.5Mb.

Please could you tell me what this means and what I can do to get around the problem. No matter what I do the message remains.

A Mohammed
Coventry

TIP OF THE MONTH

Don't get caught out, think of the potential screaming and tearing your hair out you'll be spared from. Take our advice (you know it makes sense!) and make an emergency disk — NOW!



```

MS-DOS Prompt
C:\DOS>format /?
Formats a disk for use with MS-DOS.

FORMAT drive: [/V:label] [/Q] [/F:size] [/B : /S] [/C]
FORMAT drive: [/V:label] [/Q] [/F:size] [/B : /S] [/C]
FORMAT drive: [/V:label] [/Q] [/F:size] [/B : /S] [/C]
FORMAT drive: [/Q] [/F:size] [/B : /S] [/C]

/V:label Specifies the volume label.
/Q Performs a quick format.
/B Specifies the size of the floppy disk to format (such as 160, 180, 320, 360, 720, 1.2, 1.44, 2.88).
/C Copies system files to the formatted disk.
/F:size Specifies the number of tracks per disk side.
/N:sectors Specifies the number of sectors per track.
/1 Formats a single side of a floppy disk.
/4 Formats a 5.25-inch 360K floppy disk in a high-density drive.
/8 Formats eight sectors per track.
/C Tests clusters that are currently marked "bad."

C:\DOS>

```

Ensure you know what format does: try Format /? to list its options.

Don't wait until you find yourself locked out from your hard disk — make an emergency boot disk. The procedure for doing this is roughly the same as making a boot disk for running a game, but the files that you copy onto it are rather different. So starting with a good quality floppy disk (after all, you are going to rely on this in an emergency) place it in the A drive and format it using

format A: /S

When the format is complete you will have a floppy that can be used to boot your machine. This is a step in the right direction but not really enough to cope with an emergency. If your hard disk isn't feeling well enough to boot your machine you need some programs to diagnose and repair the damage. To diagnose the problem you need either Scandisk.exe and/or Chkdsk.exe. Copy one or both of these onto your emergency disk.

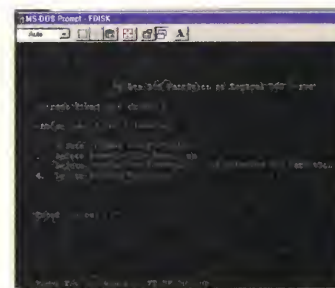
If the problem is serious you might also need to refresh the master boot sector or even repartition the hard disk. To do this you will need Fdisk.exe. The command to refresh the master boot sector is

Fdisk /MBR

To repartition the disk you simply run FDISK and follow through the menu options. It is important to remember that repartitioning will lose everything stored on the disk. Finally, if everything else fails you will need Format.com to reformat the hard disk.

Armed with these few files you should be able to get your machine's hard disk back as long as it isn't suffering a hardware failure. To get the

rest of the machine back you will also need the old Autoexec.bat and Config.sys files. Copy this to your emergency disk but change their names to Autoexec.org and Config.org to stop them being used when you boot from the emergency floppy. Also copy any drivers that you might have difficulty finding again and, if you are running Windows, the System.ini and Win.ini files. Of course you also need to make a secure backup of your hard disk on a regular basis — and that's exactly what our step-by-step is all about!



Warning! If you try to use FDISK incorrectly, it can wipe your hard drive — so follow our advice!

Just send your PC problems to Q&A, PC Review, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

A Most programs require some space on the hard disk and 2.5Mb isn't unreasonable these days. Of course your hard disk has only a limited capacity and will eventually fill up, and it's at this point that you have no choice but to erase something from it to make some free space. Most of us find this choice unbearable! All of the programs on it are valuable and picking one to erase is difficult; what's worse is that you often need to delete more than one file to free any substantial amount of space. I could tell you the command to erase a file, erase a group of files and so on, but to be honest erasing files is dangerous if you don't know what you are doing. My advice is to get a book on MS-DOS (if that's your operating system) and read up on files, filenames and how to look after them. It isn't difficult and it won't take you long to sort it out. If you use Windows, deleting files in the File Manager is even easier but you still need to understand what's going on before you do anything irrevocable.

WINDOWS

Q I own Windows 3.1 and recently this message appears when it loads:

"Cannot find a device file that may be needed to run Windows in 386 enhanced mode."

"You need to run the set-up program again."

"Vpower.386"

"Press a key to continue."

I press a key and Windows starts and works as usual, but when I run the set-up program this message does not go away.

Could you please tell me what this message means and tell me how to get rid of it?

Stephen Meredith
Cardiff

A Presumably some piece of software that you installed added this driver to Windows — it's not uncommon — and you have deleted it, not knowing what it was for. The only other possibility is that the driver has been damaged by a disk error or has been overwritten. Given that Windows works without it, you might as well just get rid of the reference to it.

Getting rid of a reference to a missing driver is fairly easy but not automatic. You need to edit the file SYSTEM.INI stored in the Windows directory. You can edit it using the special Sysedit program, which you will find in \Windows\System, or you can use Notepad. When you get into it look for a line that ends "Vpower.386" — it's most likely down in the section that begins [Drivers]. When you have found it simply edit it out of the file. The only thing I need to add is that messing about with SYSTEM.INI can

make Windows stop working, so keep a back-up copy before making changes, just in case. You can do this using the FileManager and copy the file (System.ini) to a temporary location.

HARDWARE

Q I have just seen a replacement mouse ball on sale in my local computer shop. After I got over the shock, I couldn't help wonder why a mouse would want one? Seriously, do mouse balls wear out or what?

Stephen Hall
Bromsgrove

A Well if you dragged your balls around the floor all day, they'd wear out too! This said, what usually causes the problem is dirt on the rollers that the mouse ball rests on. The solution is to remove the mouse ball and clean the rollers. This procedure in itself is responsible for more replacement balls sold than any other, the reason being that the user places the ball on a desk or some flat surface and when they look again, it's gone! You'll also find that the mice balls themselves occasionally pick up dust and dirt — having a rubber coasting often makes them particularly attractive to lonely dust particles floating around. To clean the ball itself simply take a clean cotton cloth and rub the ball in it. If you really are in need of new mice balls check out our news section last issue. CPC in Preston is now selling 22mm spherical objects, ideal for most mice, for 69p each in quantities of 10 or more. Call CPC on (01772) 654455.

ALTERNATIVELY

There are lots of alternative back-up programs and there is a version of Mbackup for Windows that you can use from the File Manager. It isn't always installed automatically, so you might have to go back to your MS-DOS diskettes and use Setup /E to do it manually. Most of the alternative back-up programs will back up to devices other than just floppy diskettes — tape drives, magneto opticals, writeable CD-ROMs and so on. The best-known names in back-up are Fastback Plus and Norton Backup (which is the one the MS-DOS program is based on), both from Symantec. If you want a shareware back-up program to try out I would recommend Flexibak Plus from Nildram Software.

Make: Fastback, Norton backup for Windows
Supplier: Symantec
Contact: Phone (01628) 592222

Make: Flexibak
Supplier: Nildram Software
Contact: (01442) 891331

Step by Step: Back-up

Panic! Life as you know it has ceased to be. Your hard drive doesn't boot, your data is lost, and the Strike Commander directory (all 40Mb of it!) has gone! If only you'd made a back up... Well now you can thanks to our step-by-step guide.

Beginners are often under the impression that data stored on a hard disk is secure, but it doesn't usually take long to find out that it isn't. Even if the hardware works perfectly it is too easy to delete a file that you didn't mean to, or to make changes that you wish you hadn't. The right thing to do is make a regular back-up, but most users don't do this. They choose to live dangerously because they believe that backing up is too difficult or too time consuming. All I can say in response is that recovering lost data is even more difficult and even more time consuming! Back-up can be done using nothing but a pack of floppy disks, a program that is included with MS-DOS and some understanding. Of course it is easier if you have some special hardware such as a tape drive or a high capacity removable drive, but the principles are exactly the same.

```
MS-DOS Prompt
C:\DOS\CONFIG.UMR
C:\DOS\MEMMANA.STS
C:\DOS\TEMP
C:\DOS\TEST
C:\DOS\TEST.TXT
C:\DOS\STOCK
C:\DOS\MSDU.INI
C:\DOS\CHLIST.MS
C:\DOS\DEFAULT.SET
C:\DOS\MSBACKUP.LOG

C:\DOS>attrib /?
Displays or changes file attributes.

ATTRIB [+R | -R] [+A | -A] [+S | -S] [+H | -H] [/drive:][path]filename [/S]

+ Sets an attribute.
- Clears an attribute.
R Read-only file attribute.
A Archive file attribute.
S System file attribute.
H Hidden file attribute.
/S Processes files in all directories in the specified path.

C:\DOS>
```

1 The key to making back-up manageable is the archive attribute. When a file is copied to a back-up this is reset. It stays this way unless you edit the file, which means that when you next make a back-up you need only copy the files that have their archive attribute set. You can examine and alter the archive attribute using the Attrib command. Most users will be embarrassed to find that every file on their disk has A set — meaning none of the files have ever been backed up!

```
MS-DOS Prompt
C:\DOS>xcopy /?
Copies files (except hidden and system files) and directory trees.

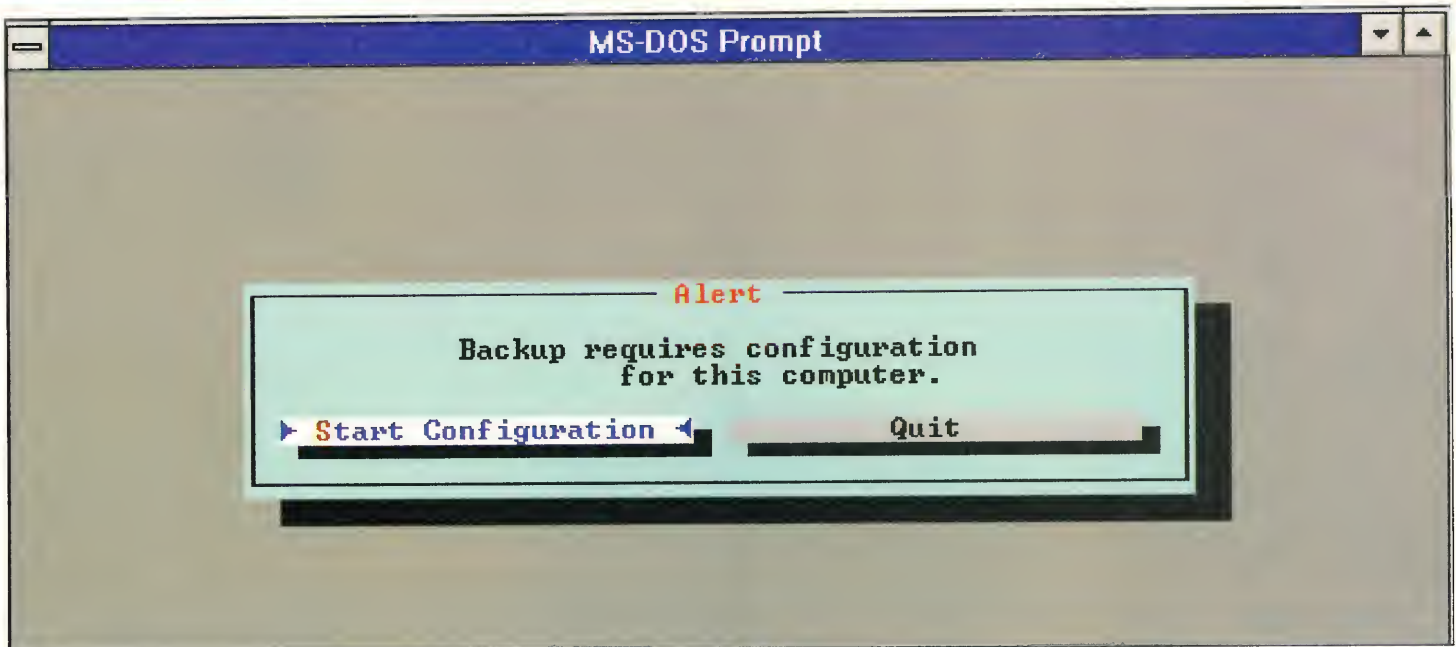
XCOPY source [destination] [/A | /M] [/D:date] [/P] [/S] [/E] [/V] [/W]

source Specifies the file(s) to copy.
destination Specifies the location and/or name of new files.
/A Copies files with the archive attribute set.
/M doesn't change the attribute.
Copies files with the archive attribute set, turns off the archive attribute.
/D:date Copies files changed on or after the specified date.
/P Prompts you before creating each destination file.
/S Copies directories and subdirectories except empty ones.
/E Copies any subdirectories, even if empty.
/V Verifies each new file.
/W Prompts you to press a key before copying.
/Y Suppresses prompting to confirm you want to overwrite an existing destination file.
/Y Causes prompting to confirm you want to overwrite an existing destination file.

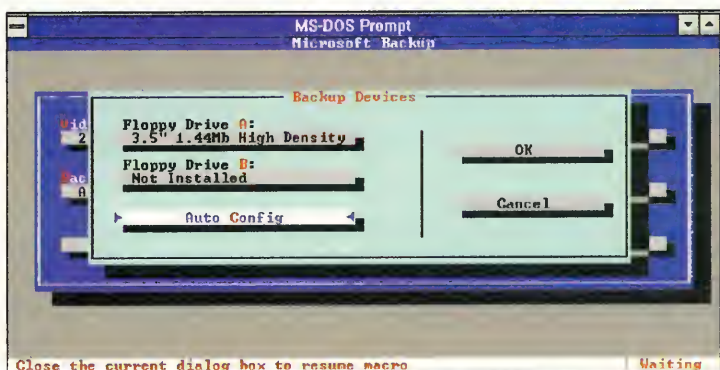
The switch /Y may be preset in the COPYCMD environment variable.
This may be overridden with /-Y on the command line.

C:\DOS>XCOPY *.* A: /M
```

2 You can use the archive attribute to make back-ups manually. The Xcopy command can be told to just copy files that have the archive attribute set and reset it after the copy is made, eg the command Xcopy *.* A: /M will archive all of the files in the current directory that have changed since the last archive to a floppy disk. If you use this command regularly you can keep an archive diskette up to date without having to copy everything each time.



3 The Xcopy method is fine for making back-ups of small numbers of files but it can't cope with backing up more than a single floppy diskette. To do this you need a back-up program. One is included with MS-DOS, and since the version MS-DOS 5 it's been reasonably good. You can start it from the MS-DOS prompt by typing `Msbackup`. Its first task is to configure itself, but it only does this the first time you run it. This configuration is a learning process for the program, where it finds out how fast it can copy data and what capacity the floppy disk can hold.



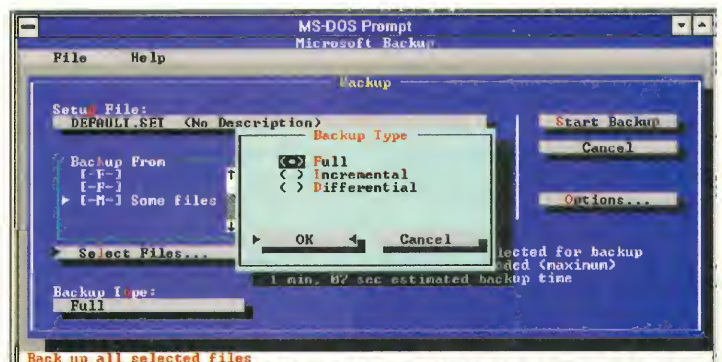
4 The configuration process tests your floppy disk drives to find out what sort they are and if they support a 'disk change' line. If they do, the back-up program can detect when you put a fresh floppy in and carry on. It also checks the speed of your machine and offers to do a trial back-up using two floppy disks to make sure that it all works — it is important that you do this. It's awful to find that a back-up is unusable.



5 Once configured, you can select Backup and begin to pick the files/directories to copy. If this is the first back-up you have made, it is likely to involve a lot of data and a lot of disks — but you don't necessarily have to back up programs, it's the data which is valuable.



6 After selecting files return to the main menu and begin the actual back-up. The number of floppy disks and time needed is estimated but in practice it usually takes less. The reason is that the data is compressed during the process. You can also choose between a full, incremental or differential back-up, each of which alters the number of disks and time taken. A full back-up copies everything you have selected and resets the archive attribute. Both an incremental and a differential back-up copies only new files and files that have changed since the last back-up. The difference is that incremental resets the archive attribute and differential doesn't. Use the latter if you are making an additional back-up — but most of the time you can use incremental.



7 Keep your back-up diskettes safe and in date order, so that if you need to restore the files from diskette you can put back the oldest versions first from the full back-up and then work your way back through to ensure that the latest versions overwrite the older. The back-up program remembers where the files have come from within catalogue files and will restore them back to their original locations. You can also opt to restore only individual files. **NB** test your back-ups work by restoring to a different directory before they are needed for real.

We lust after them. We crave them. We wake up in a cold

Fan mail,

Console yourself

I've never written to a magazine before but after reading your biased PC vs Next Generation consoles (Judgement Day, issue 46), I had to put pen to paper. Pat Fox managed to remain reasonably balanced throughout most of the article but when he reached the conclusion the whole thing just became a puff piece for the PC.

He claims that the PC's greatest strength is its futureproof upgradability. While that's true, it's also the PC's greatest weakness in a face off with the new consoles. But that means backwards compatibility. It simply won't be able to make the sort of quantum leaps that console manufacturers can.

Face up to facts. PCs are always going to lag behind specialised hardware but that's no reason to feel inferior. The PC is expandable (you don't lose all the money you'd invested in it previously) and more flexible (surfing the net, strategy games, serious applications etc).

It shouldn't pretend to be something it so obviously isn't.

Stephen Leonard
Scotland

I really don't think it's fair to describe Judgement Day as a "puff piece for the PC". While researching the article Pat was blown away by the quality of games on the PlayStation and Saturn, and considered the same issues you raise in your letter. Hardware is coming down in price all the time and the edge that (affordable) consoles will have over the PC won't last. With chips set to go RISC in the not too distant future and the price of RAM, hard disks and graphics accelerators falling, PC owners can be more confident in their machines than ever before.



▲ FX Fighter on PC — giving next gen consoles a run for their money.

Why, oh why, oh why?

Let me begin by saying that this is not going to be one of those, "why can't I run this on my underspecced machine?" type of letters. All I want to know is, why are so many games so ridiculously resource hungry? An 8Mb DX266 seems to be the minimum for so many games, and that's just to run it at all. A lot of games seem to need 16Mb Pentiums to get the best from the game (which is what you paid for in the first place). That would be fair enough if they played like a wet dream but apart from a bit of dodgy FMV, most of them turn out to be nothing that special. How many people can afford those sort of systems anyway?

Andrew Beckett
Carnoustie

A not uncommon question. The simple answer is that sophisticated game engines, digital sound and realistic animation require your PC to process greater and greater amounts of information. For that to be possible at an acceptable speed you need more power, so...

As to the quality of such games?

Write to:
PC Review,
Emap Images,
Priory Court,
30-32
Farringdon Lane,
London
EC2R 3AU

Some of them do seem a bit like using a flamethrower to strip paint but if you look at games like Bio Forge, Magic Carpet and Wing Commander III you can see that not every programmer just chucks resources at a problem.

Nothing new under the sun

Oft heard comments in games reviews is 'it's another platformer' or 'it's a beat 'em up'. Are there any new games genres left? In the early days we had paddle games like Pong and then we got platformers and so on, and so on. Will it just

Reader's Survey



Thanks to everyone for the marvelous response to our recent reader survey — we'll be publishing the results when they're all collated in a future issue. In the meantime, here are a just a few of the issues you raised which we can reply to right now.

Here's the first of them — ED.

Marks out of ten

So why PC Review doesn't give a percentage in the verdict box? It might seem superficially more accurate but we take the view that the score is an indication, and to make a full purchasing decision you have to read the whole of a review.

Switching to a percentage system wouldn't change things, in fact it's more cumbersome.

Hat

be variations on a theme from now on?

Chris Collins
East Kilbride

Difficult one to answer this, but I think the simple answer is that there are only a limited number of basic elements which go to make up a game, and indeed make it a game. You could say that most of the styles of game that humans have ever played are mirrored in computer games. But (und zis is a big but) that's no reason to be pessimistic about things. People have been playing games for thousands of years and no one is bored with them yet. There's no reason to think that will change just because they're on a computer.

Help me, I'm all boxed in!

Can someone tell me what sort of deranged psychotic designs PCs? I'm not talking about the complexity of the software, I'm talking about how they're actually assembled.

Recently I helped a friend install a new hard drive on his PC (yes, I've been reading your recent correspondence on women and PCs and some of us do actually know about hardware) and it reminded me of what horrors lurk inside

Reader's survey Bigger, better, budgets.

You want a bigger magazine. We're flattered. For the same price? Not possible, I'm afraid. More pages means more paper, more staff etc, etc (see 'Nice price'). Besides, with our issue sizes (which are still bigger than most of our competitors) we can concentrate on cramming in more of the PC Review quality you know and love so well.

sweat at the very thought of them. What are they? Letters!

the nice case of a PC. It looks as though they got a box and just jammed all the components inside without any thought that someone would ever open it (yes, who would ever need to open a PC?).

I slashed my fingers on circuit boards as I fought my way through a tropical jungle of wires. Is it a conspiracy by the manufacturers to get you to pay them every time you need anything done, or did they just employ a semi-trained monkey to do the design work? What would be so wrong with a logical layout and enough room to move?

Laura Simpson
Buffalo
New York State, USA

Believe me Laura, with six PCs being used in the office we've reflected on just that very question, usually prompted by the need for yet another bulk order of plasters. To be fair to the manufacturers, they are responding to a demand for smaller cases — we all want a dinky little PC that runs like a Silicon Graphics

friend's PC suggests a promising career move might be in order.

Brick up those windows

Why bother devoting any space to Windows 95? It hasn't even gone on sale yet and it'll be months before more than a handful of people have it. I know it's the 'in thing' but why clog up the pages of PC Review with pieces on an operating system that hardly anyone actually owns?

Bruce Neale
Colchester

For a start, it should be shipping by the time you read this and with Microsoft pushing it hard it won't be long until it's as common as Windows 3.1. Beyond the simple numbers game Windows 95 is the immediate future of the PC.

Greater protection from system crashes, pre-emptive multitasking, improved ease of use and no more 640K memory problems. How often have you wished

Reader's survey Nice price

A lot of you who commented in our readership survey asked if the magazine could be cheaper. I have to say that if the cover price was less then we couldn't be produce the same magazine. Most of the cover price goes on paper, distribution, printing, salaries (not excessively generous, I have to say) and buying utilities to put on the coverdisk. I'm afraid that you get what you pay for and the same applies to us.

Good question, wish we could come up with a good answer. We thought about phoning up some manufacturers and asking them, but then someone pointed out that they'd either laugh at us or become embarrassed. Being "tired and emotional" from the night before, we decided not to risk it. I think the original colour was because PCs weren't viewed as being something you would have in your home and the colour scheme was more laboratory than living room.

As to why they still look that way... The only reason can be tradition. Some manufacturers, such as ICL, are beginning to produce PCs with black cases.

Bug Spray

I know it's a common question, but why are so many games released with bugs in them? Why is it that you can spend over £50 on a game, only to find that it doesn't actually work? Don't the software companies bother to debug their products before they release them on the unsuspecting public?

Nick Melton
Kircaldy

Most reputable software houses rigorously test their products before they ship but trying to test them with all possible combinations of hardware and software would be an impossible task. Having said that, we do get the occasional game which crashes with a regularity suggestive of, "we've finished the programming, you can start shipping now".



▲ More games — or a balance? Let us know what you think.

leaned too heavily towards games news then we wouldn't be doing our job.

Fashion statement

This is probably going to sound a little bit fatuous but why are all PCs beige? The only way makers get away with it is because all PCs are the same boring colour, but by the same logic you could say that if everyone drove Skodas then Skodas would be cool. Is there actually any reason why PCs have to look as exciting as trainspotting poster?

Gareth Bissicks
Twyford

Reader's Survey Getting enough?

"Why isn't PC Review a bi-weekly?" was a comment not infrequently included on the survey returns. Quite simply it wouldn't be as good or it would cost a lot more. You may devour the magazine in a day, but it takes us a good deal longer than that to put it together. Rather a lot of it in fact. If we produce the magazine in a lot less time than Bill (our neighbourhood publican) would be a far wealthier man.

e mail,

Workstation — and we tend to forget that we will need to open the damn thing up at some point.

Having said that, some of the PCs we've seen do seem to suggest that they were laid out as a recruitment test for NASA engineers. If it is a PC support conspiracy then your skill with your

that your PC had all that? That's why we will continue to cover Win95.

All the news that's fit to print?

In the news section, why don't you devote a lot more space to games news instead of hardware, applications and company take-overs? All I really want to know is what's coming out and when. If I wanted to know about lawsuits and buy-outs then I'd be getting the Financial Times, not PC Review. Please, more games news.

Phil Brice
Clevedon

Reader's survey Give me a commercial break

Quite a lot of people asked why all the ads couldn't be concentrated in one section so they could just skip them. Well, you answered your own question. If advertisers knew that our readers could skip the ads they wouldn't have much reason to bother placing them. The end result would be a more expensive magazine with all the costs being put onto the cover price. Are they really so bad? The other frequent request was for less ads. I'm afraid the same thing applies. Less adverts, more expensive magazine.

Please feel free to send in correspondence to us via the Internet on pcreview@cix.com, publink.co.uk, or via the post using the address printed on these pages.

E-mail

3D Atlas

It has more vital statistics than Pamela Anderson, and, er, more globes as well, twelve of 'em to be exact. Cal Jones reports.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 25MHz 486, Win

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: All Win comp cards

START HERE

Around the world in 80 ways

From the gross national product of Ghana to the world's active volcanoes, 3D Atlas contains a mine of useful information. The hard part is knowing where to start.

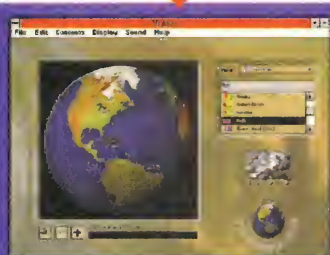
Apparently, 3D Atlas won the 1995 International EMMA award for best information and reference product, so I thought it safe to assume that it'd be good even before I'd got its little box open. Actually, I've no idea what an EMMA is, but it sounds quite important, which is the main thing, isn't it? And 3D Atlas is good. It's a mine of information on all things global, from the gross national product of every country to that worrying hole in the ozone layer. But if you just want to be a would-be jetsetter you can go around the world and end up with... an extensive knowledge of flags.



The program is based around three main globes: environmental, which shows Earth as it appears from space; physical, which is basically a relief map of the world, and political, which shows countries and their borders. And in case you're wondering, you can't fault the globes for accuracy since they have been created by painstakingly piecing together thousands of satellite photos. The globes can be rotated, and you can also add 'pins' to them to highlight areas which are of interest to you. In addition, you can display lines of longitude and latitude, cities, mountains, volcanoes, ocean depths and other features.

What a wonderful world

The nine additional globes display information such as tectonic plate boundaries, Earth at night, atmosphere and so on. From these you can access video clips and animations such as 3D flights (rendered from satellite photos) over mountain ranges, time lapses, satellite photos of cities which you can zoom in on, flights over different ecological regions including rainforest and tundra, and stories. This last category examines 11 environmental issues, ranging from global warming to over-fishing, and is accompanied by animations and spoken dialogue. The depth of information isn't what you might like, but what's there is explained clearly.



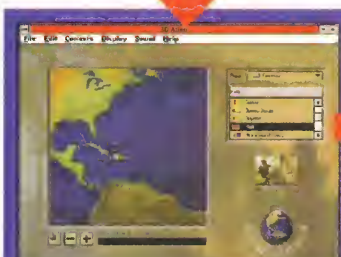
The environmental globe is made up from satellite photos and shows Earth as it appears from space. I fancy a closer look at Haiti.



▲ The Biomes section shows examples of various climates — this is a video of a flight over tropical rainforest.



▲ A Haitian homestead one of the many images in 3D Atlas.



Using the Zoom button, I've homed right in on my chosen country. There are nine levels of magnification, and once you've reached maximum zoom the button is greyed out.



The information on individual countries is quite sparse, but the Atlas will inform you of the main details of interest, such as size of country, population, main cities, spoken languages, religions, currency and GNP.



3D Atlas also gives you the option to view photographs of a few choice locations. Haiti looks idyllic in this shot, but after watching *The Serpent* and *the Rainbow* I'm not so sure I'd want to visit...



Right, time to move on, that's enough of Haiti. You can select some of the world's main cities, and being a Londoner, I thought I'd take a peek at the old *Smoke*. Could do with Haiti's blue skies, though.

On top of that, there's a whole section devoted to statistics (everything from how many homes have running water to what sort of contraception people use), from which you can create your own graphs and charts. This will be of use to students of geography, economics and social studies, and some of it is actually quite interesting. However, you have to bear in mind that information of this kind is liable to date rather quickly.

Although 3D Atlas is well presented, informative and detailed, I found it a bit lacking in the 'fun' factor. Trawling your way around all those maps, sifting through the statistics and listening to explanations of various geographical phenomena is hard work, and not

something I'd do for pleasure. It looks great, but it's not the sort of package you'd pick up to dip into casually. This is a heavyweight reference title, and as such it's excellent. It's the best multimedia atlas around, in fact, and makes a good (if slightly less portable) alternative to the traditional book-based atlas.

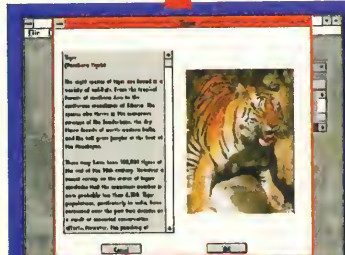
However, its coverage of environmental issues, physical geography and other ancillary topics is somewhat sketchy, offering only the briefest of introductions to each subject. Buy 3D Atlas if you want to find out where things are, but if you want to dig a little deeper and find out why they're there, you'll need a dedicated geographical, environmental or cultural title.



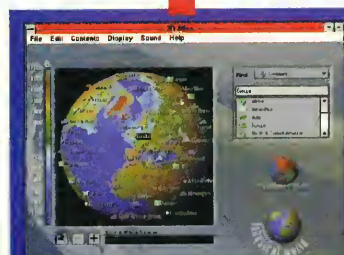
The political globe shows all the nations around the world, and also gives you access to the information held on individual countries plus their geography, imports and exports, and size.



When you want to access other globes, you can do so either from a menu or via the browser. This, the tectonic globe, shows the plates which together make up the Earth's crust.



Click on the animals portrayed on the extinction globe and you'll learn more about each species and the threats they face. The tiger is just one of a great many species in peril.



OK, let's take a quick look at the physical world instead. This globe offers a topographical view of Earth's landmasses. I've also chosen to highlight the major oceans, rivers, cities, mountains and volcanoes.



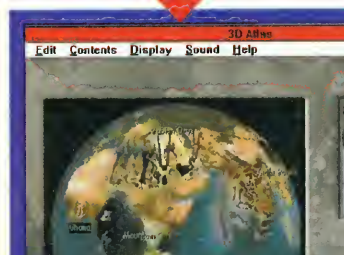
The world clock globe shows the different time zones around the Earth. You can find a point on the globe by setting the time and date, and also look at the patterns of light and darkness relative to time.



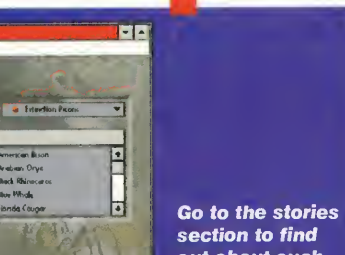
We all love statistics, eh? From 3D Atlas' mine of information you can make graphs and charts — here's one I prepared earlier, which compares population size to life expectancy. Useful for school projects, huh?



These satellite pictures were taken by Russian spy satellites, and it's possible to zoom right in for a closer look. You can just make out Tower Bridge, along with some of London's other famous landmarks.



Go to the stories section to find out about such environmental issues as acid rain, population, pollution, ozone or, in this case, the extinction of wildlife.



Once you've had your fill of facts, test your knowledge in the 'fun' quiz, Around the World. Play it enough and you'll soon be an expert on flags of the world. Great.



▲ The tiger is just one of the many endangered species at risk in the wild today. Using 3D Atlas you can find and locate many more. In fact the number of species under threat may turn out to be quite surprising to some.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Educational

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Price: £64.99

Contact: (01753) 549442

PROS

No question about it, this is the best multimedia atlas money can buy...

CONS

...but that's rather a lot of money for something that will probably be out of date soon.

8

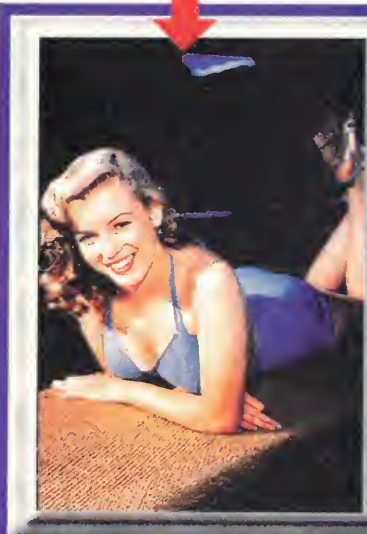
Bernard of Hollywood's Marilyn



▲ If you want to know anything substantial about Monroe's life before 1946, forget it. This release deals almost exclusively with her public profile during her brief decade-and-a-half of fame.

START HERE

Bernard of Hollywood's Marilyn delivers all manner of information, although unfortunately there's no footage from any of her films. It's likely that only the die-hard Marilyn aficionados will find the snippets of trivia appealing.



Marilyn offers you half a dozen places to start and the most prominent feature is a five-part anecdotal biography detailing Monroe's life from 1946-62. Watch the transition from girl-next-door to sultry siren.

Gordon Houghton lands the awesome job of getting to know number one goddess Marilyn Monroe (swoon).

The jury is still out on Marilyn Monroe's fairly short-lived film career. Laurence Olivier called her 'a professional amateur', Otto Preminger described her as 'a vacuum with nipples', and Billy Wilder said he had 'never met anyone as utterly mean... nor as utterly fabulous on screen'. Despite dubious critical acclaim, she remains probably the most popular and charismatic actress this century.

It's hardly surprising, then, that someone should come up with an interactive multimedia product based on her life. But what you might find surprising is the form it takes. Bernard of Hollywood's Marilyn is based on the book of the same name, and its main biographical sections include around 100 photographs taken by the 'legendary' Hollywood photographer, Bruno Bernard. This tie-in means that the whole

package is as much about the relationship between the photographer and the star he created, as about Monroe herself.

This uniquely focussed approach won't suit everyone, but it does help create an unusual angle on a difficult subject. For example, most of this CD is devoted to a five-part biography, written in an anecdotal style which some will find amusing and chatty, while others will think it disjointed and irritating. Either way, this is a very personal eulogy to Monroe's fame.

There are several ways of examining the audio-visual material on offer. The most obvious route is the literal, chapter-by-chapter approach with its book-style displays, narrated extracts from Bernard's own diary and cross references to

CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 386, Windows 3.1
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: 256 VGA
Sound: Sound Blaster

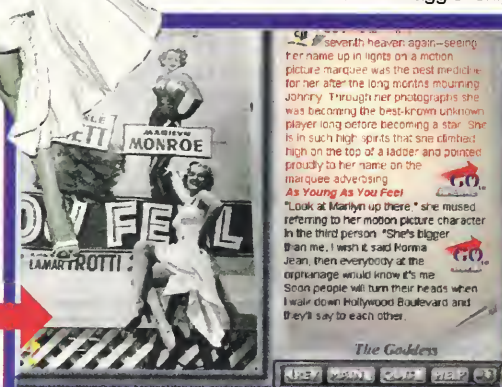
other media. However, don't expect it to keep you occupied for long.

Alternatively, you can plough through over 100 different trivia snippets, which reveal a host of interesting but sadly pointless facts. Did you know that Monroe's favourite snack was caviar? Or that two commemorative stamps were released in her honour in Mali and the Congo? That she earned only \$5 an hour for modelling in 1945? That her film *Bus Stop* was banned in Iraq because it was 'dangerous to boys and young men'? Well, you know now.

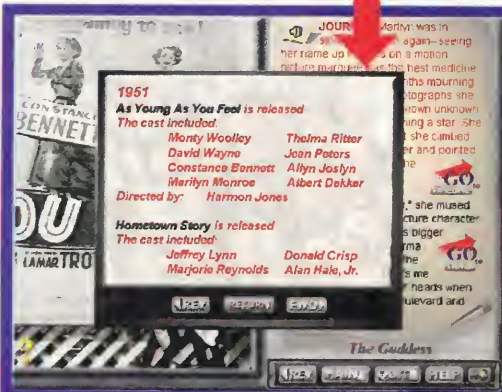
Less impressive is the obligatory Timeline feature. This could have redressed the balance of the overly-chummy main narrative with some hard facts, but instead you get some scant personal details (her marriage to Joe DiMaggio only merits four lines) and

The Birth of Marilyn 1949-1950

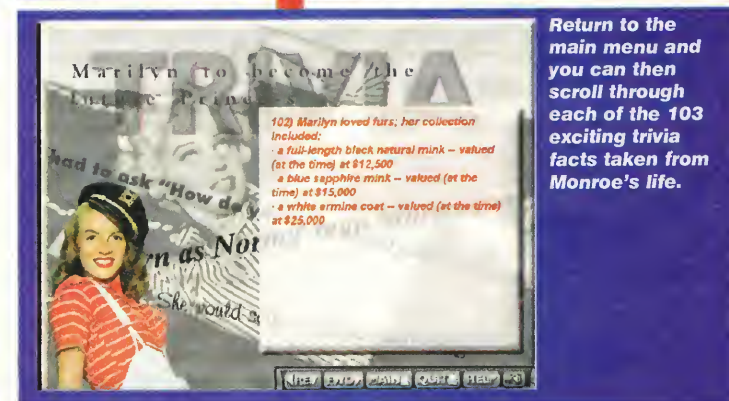
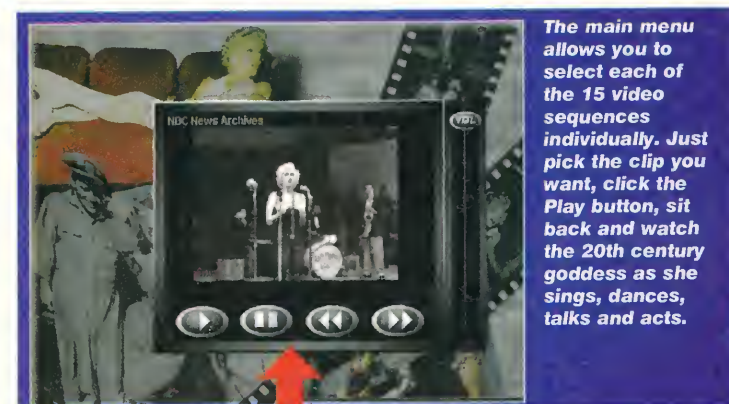
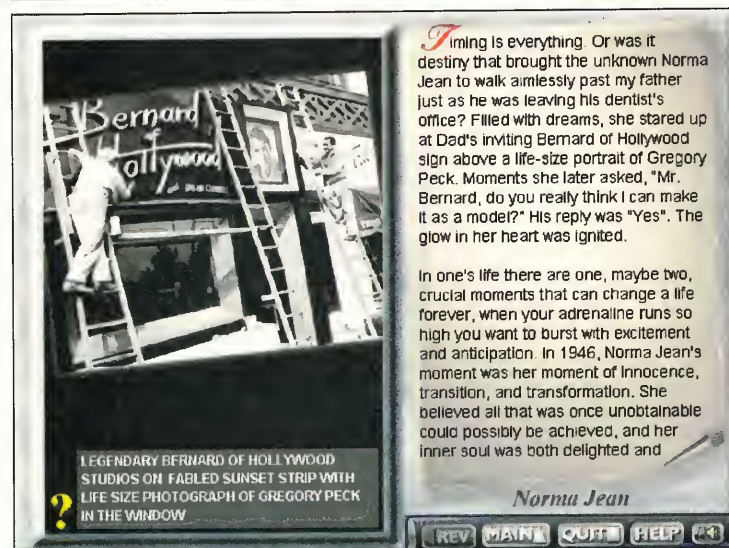
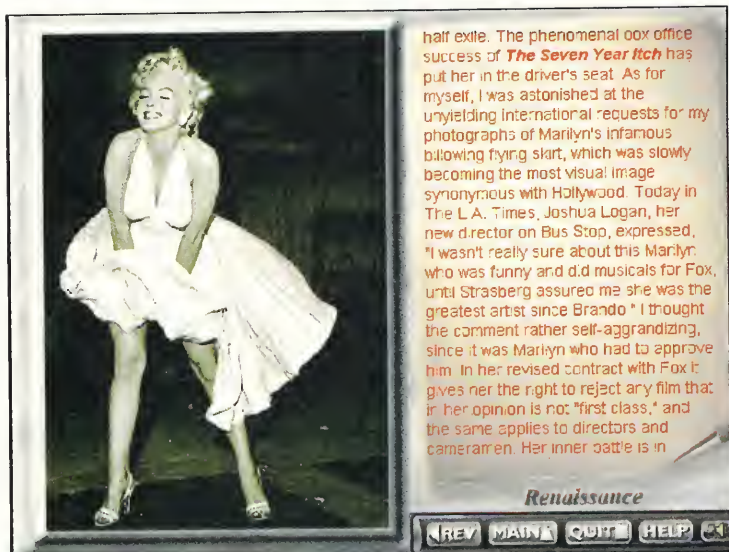
Bernard took Marilyn to a shoot at the Palm Springs Racquet Club, the private hideaway of the Hollywood colony in 1949 to cheer her up after she'd been dropped by 20th Century Fox. ... the photo safari would change the course of Marilyn's life forever. ... It was here that she caught the eye of Johnny Hyde, a vice president of William Morris who had important and influential connections in the film business. Hyde was instrumental in securing Marilyn roles in *The Asphalt Jungle* and *All About Eve*, and secured her a seven-year contract with 20th Century Fox.



Tear your eyes away from the glorious photos for one moment and select one of these biographical extracts for detailed info on the period in question, plus Bernard's journal extracts and cross references to films, trivia and video clips.



Click on the Timeline prompt and you'll be rewarded with some snappy little facts about Monroe's life. If you're looking to scratch below the surface of Marilyn herself a bit more, you might find the details about films and personal events a little too minimal.



◀ The title has a wealth of photos which are instantly recognisable.

some paltry film info which doesn't even include plot summaries. However, it does at least provide five entries on Monroe's life before 1946.

The video material is much more interesting. There are 15 sequences in all, including Monroe's first screen test, a petrol advert, a performance for troops in Korea, the famous happy birthday message sung to President Kennedy, a couple of interviews, and newsreel footage of her death. The quality isn't great as the sound is sometimes fuzzy and the pictures are like watching an old movie on a 3" television screen, but the content is fascinating.

There are three other features worth mentioning: a brief but interesting biography of Bruno Bernard, a screen saver utility which allows you to display the photos of Marilyn on your PC, and a section devoted to Monroe's legacy. In common with the rest of the disc, the last section still doesn't have the kind of in-depth detail I was looking for.

Some like it not

Realistically I can't see this release appealing to many people, other than those who are already Marilyn devotees. Its book origins limit the scope and create a narrative style which is highly personal, and it's quite expensive for the amount of information and tools you get. There are several major omissions,

◀ **Bruno Bernard's personality is stamped over the CD, in scripts of private conversations with Monroe, narrated excerpts from his journal and a brief synopsis of his life.**

too. For example, there are no clips from any of Monroe's 29 films, there's no cross referencing facility which, say, would let you look up all the references to Arthur Miller, and throughout there simply isn't enough detail.

At the end of the day, if you're the kind of person who's seen all the films, read several biographies and you're keen to augment your collection of Marilyn memorabilia, this will be a worthy addition. It probably won't tell you anything you don't already know, but its wealth of photographs, video material, trivia snippets and anecdotes are worth having. If, like me, you're an idle dabbler on the fringes of the Marilyn cult, you'll find there are too many omissions to make the investment worthwhile.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Biography

Publisher: Corel

Price: £46.99

Contact: (01491) 873323

PROS

The photos, video clips and trivia supplement a sound biographical base, but...

CONS

...once you've been through it there's not much incentive to return.

5



Haight-Ashbury

in the Sixties!

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486SX, Win 3.1

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster

Cal Jones joins the acid casualties for a tour of the hippest era in history.

I visited Haight Street once. It was raining, all the shops were shut and the taxi driver who dropped me there advised me not to venture too far down the street because I'd probably get shot. Great. As a result, my memories of Haight Street are not exactly fond. Haight Street? Hate Street, more like.

During the late sixties, though, Haight-Ashbury was a very different kind of place. This San Francisco district gained notoriety as the home of the anti-war movement, women's liberation, youth rebellion and the hippie lifestyle in general. The music scene flourished here, along with other arts such as poetry and painting. People lived in communes, practiced free love and took drugs. It was a wild time.

Whether you look back on it with nostalgia or disapproval, you can't deny that Rockument, the developer of this product, has done a good job of capturing the spirit of the Haight-Ashbury period. The two CD-ROMs are packed full of information in the form of artwork, articles from the San Francisco Oracle, poetry, spoken commentary and music. There's footage of bands such as the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane, musings from Haight-Ashbury personalities like Timothy Leary and Allen Ginsburg and video clips of important events from the era. All this is presented in

a suitably psychedelic fashion, with fractal-based backgrounds, montages and bizarre animations.

Trippy

Weirdest of all is

Drop Out, a game which takes you on a trip through hippie youth culture as you

attempt to find enlightenment. It takes place on a board made up of four concentric rings, and you have to work your way into the centre by accumulating points. There's no skill involved whatsoever, but it looks good and does give you a taste of the lifestyle. Well, sort of. It actually appears to take the piss at times. I landed on a square which told me that a mysterious barefooted person had given me a beautiful drawing of a mandala, whereupon I had a transcendental experience. I picked up a few spiritual points for that one. Yes, well.

Haight-Ashbury in the Sixties! is really aimed at old hippies. Younger folk will enjoy it if they have a special interest in the period, but I must admit that I felt bemused by the whole thing. I went through my impressionable teenage years during the eighties — the era of Rambo, yuppies and power dressing, so I've always viewed hippies as a drugged-out, dirty, work-shy bunch who could have done

with a couple of years' National Service to knock some sense into them.

Your views on the hippie culture might be a little less extreme than my own, but unless you were there at the time (or wished you had been), you'll probably find the whole thing rather ridiculous.

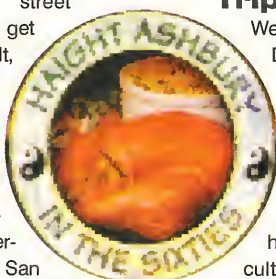
It is, however, a very good bit of multimedia. The presentation is truly original (I can't imagine

Microsoft ever coming up with anything like this) and it's easy to find your way around the various features. No matter how odd it is,

the package is genuinely informative. I learned a lot about the period, and if it hasn't actually made me any more tolerant, at least I have a better understanding of the strange collec-

tion of people, trip-like events and music which made Haight Ashbury what it was. Once again, whether or not you enjoy it depends

on whether the subject matter is your cup of herbal tea. If it is, you'll be bang in the middle of hog heaven.



A QUICK TRIP TO HAIGHT STREET.

★ *Haight-Ashbury in the Sixties!* gets my vote for weirdest release of the year. *Drugs* would get you into the spirit of things, but I wouldn't advise it!



★ *Let's start off with a bit of music. The Charlatans (no, not the floppy-haired Charlatans of the early nineties) were one of the bands who featured heavily in the Haight-Ashbury scene. Their Edwardian-style get-up was different even back then.*



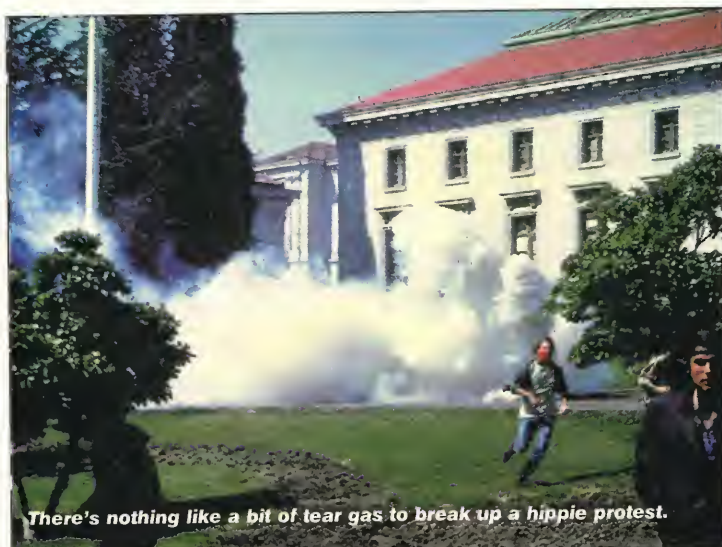
★ *Quick, hide the stash, it's the rozzers! One of the things you'll learn is that the police were none too tolerant of the hippies' hedonistic lifestyle, particularly where drugs were concerned. Which was most of the time, it would seem....*



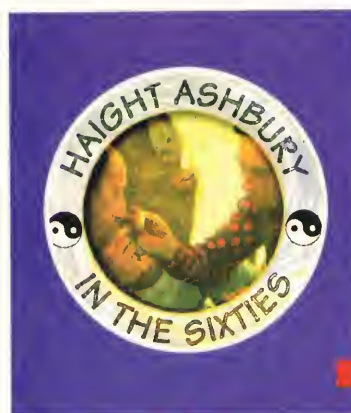
▲ This rather pleasant picture is taken from the Death of Hippie slideshow. And very nice it is too.



▲ There are an awful lot of very strange images on this CD — what were these people on? Kool Aid, I suppose.

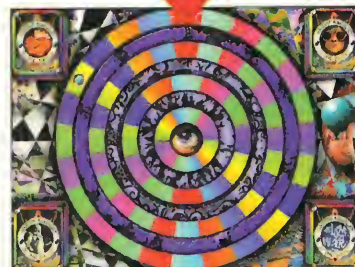


There's nothing like a bit of tear gas to break up a hippie protest.



Drop Out, the game that accompanies this program, is definitely a bit on the odd side. It's a bit like a tripped-out version of Trivial Pursuit, only with none of the skill involved. The idea is to achieve enlightenment by gaining points for food and shelter (well, even hippies have to eat), hipness, spirituality and love. It looks very nice, but scoring points is a completely random affair and I found it a bit boring. ♥

★ Staring at this image when you're smoking the devil's weed, marijuana, is supposed to enhance your state of mind, or something. Don't try this at home, kids.



▲ The hippies were a demonstrative lot. During this event, titled "Death of Hippie," they burned coffins to symbolise, er, the death of hippies, perhaps, and the attainment of enlightenment or some such nonsense. Daft buggers.



▲ You can access artwork, articles and poetry from the San Francisco Oracle, the official paper for the Haight-Ashbury district. It was published between 1966 and 1968, and is a good record of what went on at the time.



▲ The program is full of strange images like this, no doubt created under the influence of nefarious substances. There's a whole slideshow of pictures to view, though taking them all in during one sitting might make your head spin a little.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: History/educational
Publisher: Comptons/Channel 4
Price: £44.99
Contact: (01703) 812755

PROS

Well presented and original, certainly gives you a feel for what the sixties were really like...

CONS

...Will confuse anyone under the age of 40.

8

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz 486DX, Windows 3.1.

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Any Windows-compatible soundcard

No, not the teenage mutant ninja turtle but the crusty old artist from the 16th century. Martin Klimes brushes with a genius.

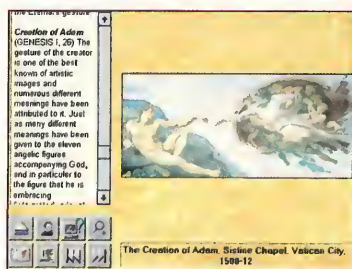


The Mastery of Michelangelo

Michelangelo is, along with Leonardo da Vinci, one of the few artists that everybody will name when you mention the Renaissance. It's thanks to his masterpieces such as the Sistine Chapel and his statue of David, that he's now almost as big a household name as Domestos. And if he doesn't get the toilet clean, at least you can distract yourself by decorating your walls with reproductions of his paintings.

EMME Interactive has gone straight for the jugular with The Mastery of Michelangelo by securing a deal with none other than the Pope himself. The result is this beautiful CD-ROM which boasts art that, barring divine intervention, you'll never see anywhere else. Why? Because the Vatican keeps it firmly under lock and key.

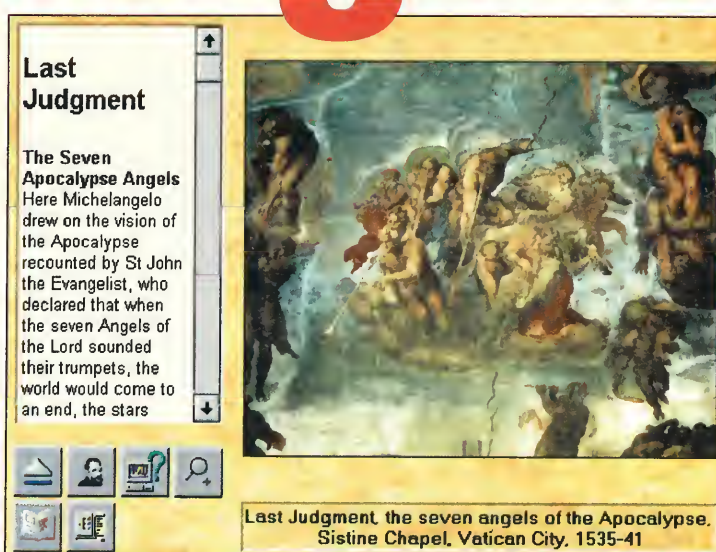
In this case, EMME has signed and sealed the rights to The Last Judgement, one of Mike's moodier pieces which takes death and damnation as its theme. Its doom-laden atmosphere (no imps or chainsaws, unfortunately) is a breath of fresh air



▲ **Sistine Chapel — the Creation of Adam — available anywhere. Also available on this disc is a good selection of the old faves, like the statue of David.**

compared to some of his more sickly-sweet ecclesiastical works.

This really puts a new spin on the man behind the frescoes. He wasn't just another boring bloke with a paintbrush, but more of an all-round normal fella. And this CD-ROM goes out of its way to paint the whole picture (if you'll pardon the pun) of his life, including bits of local history to give you a feel for the times he lived in and what he had to put up with when trying to get a commission for a piece of work. It's interesting without ever getting booky or



dull. This isn't a hardcore academic work, after all, but entertainment. If you want scholarly studies, go to Cambridge and sign up to wear a silly robe for three years. If you fancy a bit of lightweight reference with plenty of pictures, then this is the place.

The Mastery of Michelangelo is easy to get around and includes examples of all the different art forms that Mike got involved in. Every work has its own small explanatory block of text. There's period(ish) music in the background, and a handful of general screens on topics related to Mike's life. Video clips and voice-over narration add to multimedia experience, and you really feel you've got your money's worth. If you could use some of the paintings to disk as a screen saver, then it would really fulfil its potential as an occasional skim-through disc, but, as it stands, it's a fine enough guide to the great man.

▲ **This map of Europe is where you can look around to see what Mike got up to during his life, where he did it, and what else was going on at the time in the world as we knew it.**



▲ **Last Judgement — just one of the pictures on this CD-ROM that you won't find anywhere else. Yes, it's new and exclusive through the Vatican and its agreement with EMME Interactive. Catch it on CD-ROM today (unless you've been to Italy recently).**

START HERE

The Four Faces of Michelangelo
So you thought that Mike just slapped paint onto walls and maybe chiselled a few bits of marble then eh? Think again. The man was not only an accomplished painter, but also a gifted sculptor, architect and life drawer.

The Pieta, St Peter's, Rome (close-up). Okay, so maybe he chiselled quite a few bits of marble in his time, including this rather funky piece, but he also did...

...the painting of St John with Christ and his mother, which just goes to show that he could do with a paintbrush what Pavarotti does with his vocal chords (without weighing 20 stone, either).



...this drawing of woman's head, which hangs in the Uffizi gallery, Florence. A demon with the charcoal, he whacked out plenty of sketches which didn't always get painted over. When they did, though, he ended up with things like...



The facade to the Porta Pia, Rome, weighs substantially more than even Pavarotti, and has been around for far longer. It's an example of Michelangelo's genius at architecture too.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Multimedia reference

Publisher: EMME Interactive

Price: £39.99

Contact: (01923) 210992

PROS

All very pretty and ever-so-slightly educational. Perfect if you want to dabble and be amazed.

CONS

It would have been nice to use some of the pics as a screen saver.

8

shorts

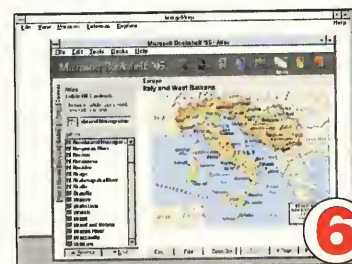
MICROSOFT BOOKSHELF 95



(Reference)

This is the 1995 update of one of Microsoft's premiere reference works. Dictionary, Thesaurus, Almanac, Encyclopedia, Book of Quotations and Chronology all just a mouse click away. The number of sources in one volume is impressive. The problem is that the hot links are frequently less than hot and the

search engine can be a little erratic. If you're the sort of person who'll feel comfortable with the way Bookshelf infiltrates your copy of Word, then you might be able to put up with it. **Microsoft, £59 • (01734) 270001 • 386SX, SVGA, Windows 3.1, 4Mb RAM**



6

HOW ANIMALS MOVE



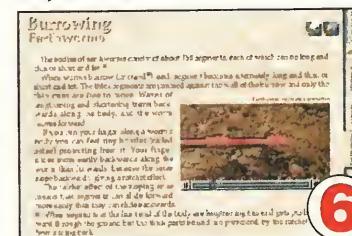
(Educational)

This CD-ROM takes a stab at explaining how animals move. And it does it rather well. The text can be a little too in-depth considering how many children will want to use it, but the animation and movies which accompany it go a long way towards mitigating the problem (if you want more depth, the text contains numerous 'hot links').

You can choose to explore or to take the excellent Guided Tour (which

unfortunately features some rather dull games). This is a good title but it could have been better.

Astrion, £39.99 • (0181) 2020011 • 386SX, VGA, Windows 3.1, 4Mb RAM



6

KIYEKO AND THE LOST NIGHT



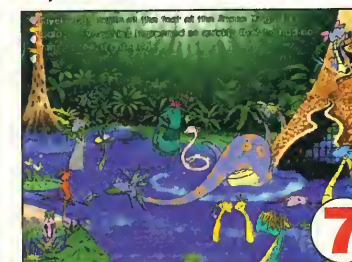
(Edutainment)

For want of a better term, I guess you'd probably call Kiyeko and the Lost Night an interactive storybook.

This CD-ROM tells the story of a young African boy who gets mixed up in all sorts of shenanigans when the nasty snake king steals the night (for some reason). The story is well-enough animated, in SVGA, and the narration is good, if a little too quiet — it is often overwhelmed by the background sound effects. Interaction amounts to clicking on various areas

on the screen to start off some brief incidental animation. Not bad, but Guildsoft's Chucky and the Sneaky Egg Thief is better.

Ubisoft, £34.99 • (0181) 9414004 • 386, SVGA, Windows 3.1, 4Mb RAM



7

I.M.MEEN



(Edutainment)

Billed as an 'educational version of Doom', I.M.Meen aims to improve your child's (of nine or over) grammar through play.

To do this your child must take the part of a poor youth who has been lured into the clutches of the evil Ignatius Mortimer Meen, and consigned to his deepest dungeons. Your only means of escape is to beat up the bad guys and then find a series of scrolls, written by Meen and his associates, which are filled with grammatical errors (much like

our own esteemed rag). Correct all the errors and you can move on to the next level. It's fun, and surprisingly educational.

Abilac, £32.95 • (0626) 332233 • 486SX25, VGA, DOS 5.0, dual speed CD-ROM, 4Mb RAM



8

What's on the



The cybersurf's up, so grab your board, hit the beach and hang ten with the digital generation.

WHAT'S ON THE NET THIS MONTH...

Off the wall.....134
Film and TV.....135
Games.....137
Music.....137
Cyberville.....137

Remember going on holiday with your parents and 'taking a drive to see the sights'? The two essential requirements (apart from a big tin of barley sugars) were a guide to the sights of interest and a map to make sure you got there. Well, here at PC Review we have no desire to see you seeking directions from some digital age yokel and so we again bring you, 'What's on the Net.'

OFF THE WALL

ArtAIDS

<http://artids.dcs.qmw.ac.uk:8001/entrance/entrance.html>

A London based web gallery of work from around the world; the theme is AIDS awareness, and the work could be considered controversial.

Nonetheless, ArtAIDS is a fine gallery in its own rights, and must be applauded for what it aims to do.

Cathouse British Comedy Pages

<http://cathouse.org:8000/BritishComedy>

Link up to a multitude of, mostly British, comedy archives and sites around the Web, featuring acts such as the Goons, Alan Partridge, Absolutely

Fabulous, Blackadder, Carry On films, and Douglas Adams. This site is also home to the BroComedy Digest, an e-zine devoted to past and present British humour.

Elvis Presley

<http://tamsun.tamu.edu/~ahb2188/elvishom.html>

Yes, Elvis is alive and well and living in cyberspace. A product of schoolgirl Andrea Berman, this is a shrine to the King and his cultural and musical legacy. Visitors can tour Graceland and listen to sound clips from classics like Love Me Tender, Heartbreak Hotel and Hound Dog. Let's be honest though, "Guitar Man" has to be the best Elvis track of all time.

EVERY Football team's homepage in the World!!

<http://metro.turnpike.net/meggie/footylinks.html>

Here's something for all footy fans everywhere! This is a page of links to some of the world's best (and worst) teams. Definitely a link to some of the best entertainment on the net!

Hot Pictures

<http://www.kiae.su/www/wtr/hotpictures/gallery.html>

Russian art has come a long way since Mayakosky and Rodchenko. Hot Pictures is one of relatively few Russian web sites, and presents the world with what new Russian artists are up to. Unfortunately, it ain't that brilliant. Bring back Constructivism.

Hustler Online

<http://hustler.onprod.com/>

Forget Penthouse and Playboy online. This is really the best commercial smut

site. For those of you who are gullible enough, you can give these people your credit card number to get access to more and dirtier pictures and stories. One handed reading will never be the same...

Going Places Home Page

<http://travel.gpnet.com/>

Again, no online booking yet, but at least you have a choice. And it's got to be better than waiting in the queue at your local travel agents, hasn't it?

Justin's Underground Links

<http://raptor.sccs.swarthmore.edu/jahall/>

If you're looking for the most twisted sites on the World Wide Web, college student Justin's choice of the weird, the wild and the wacky is a fine place to begin. Almost every link from this popular and well-maintained site is worth a look. There's a focus on the clandestine, the visual and the bizarre, plus simple instructions on how to publish your own pages.



▲ The rather dubious Hustler pages. Hmmm?

OTiS

<http://sunsite.unc.edu/otis/otis.html>

What does OTiS stand for? How about, 'Operative Term is Stimulate' This is a BIG site, with literally thousands and thousands of works of art on display. Some may find it a little too challenging, but this site definitely is worth a visit just to see how artists are using the web as a new media.

Subway Navigator

<http://metro.jussieu.fr:10001/bin/cities/english>

Mornington Crescent, anyone? Want to find out how to get there? And, hey, it doesn't have to be in the UK, either. This is the world's first virtual route planner for virtually every subway system in the world; type in the station you want to start from, and your destination, and the Navigator does the rest. It'll even give you an estimated journey time. Very useful.

The Amazing Fish Cam!

<http://www2.netscape.com/fishcam/fishcam.html>

Dumb or what? It depends if you like tropical fish or not. Every 30 seconds, a new picture from the fishtank arrives onto your monitor. Where's the chips?

The Creative Internet

<http://www.galcit.caltech.edu/~werdna/fun.html>

This is a major source of information about pop culture, with extensive sections on music and television. The Complete TV Guide includes the ultimate TV list which contains more than 135 links to information about 35 TV series. The best coverage is, unsurprisingly, devoted to Star Trek, with The

Simpsons and Married With Children following close behind. The lists include newsgroups, mailing lists and Web pages. The ultimate band list offers more than 752 links to info about 177 bands. There's also the Internet's 'hottest music links'.

Sovereign Sailing

<http://www.vossnet.co.uk/yacht/brokers/sovereign/surfsail.html>

There must be a few of our readers who are top International Playboys. If so, then this is a site well worth seeing. You can find out which yacht is available for your all-summer Mediterranean party, and how much it'll cost.

The Independent Holiday Shop

<http://www.tcp.co.uk/~holidays/>

Easier than going to a travel agents. Alas, there is no facility to book online.

FILM AND TV

Battlestar Galactica

<http://www.carleton.edu/BG/>

Remember Battlestar Galactica? Unfortunately, I do, too. And so do many others, it seems. This site reminisces those unforgettable TV moments, and has links to other related sites. Great. I wonder what Battlestar fans are called? Galaxies?

Beavis and Butthead

<http://calvin.hsc.colorado.edu/>

Much what you would expect from a rabid fan of MTV's pop culture analysis, as seen through the eyes of two dysfunctional juvenile delinquents.

Buena Vista MoviePlex

<http://bvp.wdp.com/>

A graphical colossus, the Buena Vista MoviePlex has loads of interesting material on Buena Vista's latest cinematic offerings. It's a bit slow because of the size of the graphics, but it does have loads of movie clips to impress your mates with.

Channel 4

<http://www.cityscape.cp.uk/channel4>

This page forms part of Channel 4's follow up service. If you missed the latest documentary all your friends are talking about, or if you saw it and just want additional information, drop into this site. Contact details for programme participants are usually up here and you sometimes find complete scripts available, too.

The Vibe: Sleaze

<http://metaverse.com/vibe/sleaze/index.html>

That Hugh Grant, eh? What a card. Find out the latest Hollywood sleaze updated every day. There are usually

loads of stories here, and as a result this is one of the most popular journalists' web sites. Read all about it here in The Vibe first!

MTV Oddities

<http://mtvoddities.via.com.com>

Animations, soundbites, graphics and airdates for MTV house pets.

Robert Lentz's Babylon 5 Resources

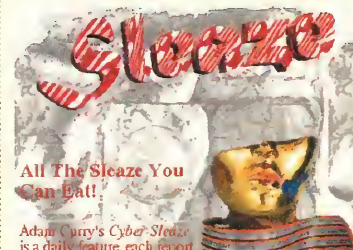
<http://www.astro.nwu.edu/lentz/sci-fi/b5/home-b5.html>

From the man who compiled the best Star Trek links comes the Babylon 5 Resources. Everything you'll need to know is here including some amusing stories created by fans, based on the TV series. There are some real pervy ones, if you have the patience to find them. (At least that's what someone told me. Honest.)

The Hollyweb Online Film Guide

<http://www.ingress.com/users/spease/hw/hollyweb.html>

Read reviews of movies which have just opened Stateside. Actually, the best bit about this site is the list of films



▲ All the hottest Hollywood gossip is at your fingertips in Sleaze.

that are currently in production; information includes who's directing, and how far into production they are.

The Klingon Language Institute

<http://www.kli.or/KLhome.html>

For those of you who are curious as to how bored people can get, this is the answer. There are some people who actually believe that Klingon should be accepted as a true language, and to prove it, they've made up the Klingon Dictionary, and have translated Shakespeare's plays into Klingon. Visit this site and feel a whole lot better about yourself.

TV Nation

<http://www.teleport.com/~xwinds/TVNation.html>

Episode listings, poll results and transcripts of the historic TV Nation day bill passed in the US Congress — superb cutting-edge current affairs satire.

Ultimate TV List

<http://tvnet.com/UTVL/utvl.html>

Over 200 TV shows can be found here, with episode guides, web sites, newsgroups and more. It even allows you to update entries. Couch potato heaven.

WWW TV Themes

<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/kenyp/sounds.html>

Yes! Hundreds and hundreds of our favourite TV theme tunes are now available for downloading! Why? I don't know, but let me tell you, this is a great idea! There's also software for sound playback for most hardware. Muzak heaven for most of us!

See this...



OFF THE WALL

Alfa Romeo Home Page

<http://amdahl1.cs.latrobe.edu.au:8080/~baragry/AlfaRomeo/>

For Alfisti only. This is a hardcore Alfa Romeo site; technical help, spare parts availability, and all sorts of Alfa trivia. This is a shining example of what happens when a bunch of real enthusiasts from round the world get together. Beautiful pics of the new Spider are available here.

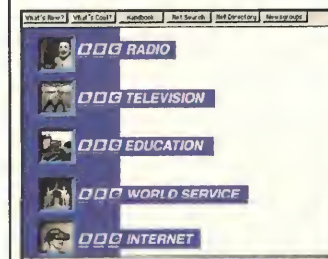


FILM AND TV

The Spot

<http://www.thespot.com/>

Lavish production standards, gorgeous girls, and blokes with radioactive white teeth. This is the world's first online soap opera, and it looks great. And just like its TV counterparts, the scripts are cheesier than a piece of Stilton left in the sun. Have a look and get hooked.



FILM AND TV

The BBC Home Page

<http://www.bbc.org.uk/>

The great British Broadcasting Corporation takes its next step into a new medium. Unfortunately its Web site is ultimately disappointing. But this vaguely useful home page for Auntie includes lots of information, and the ubiquitous programme listings of course. If the web is like teletext on speed, then this is like the web on mogadon.

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GAMES

Destiny Starworks

http://www.tq.com/destiny_starworks/destiny_starworks_home.html

Hey, if you're not a believer, then this is a game, OK? Personalised astrology, giving quite detailed information. Just ignore the bad stuff, and you'll be OK.

Doomgate

<http://www.cedar.buffalo.edu/~kapis-p/doom/DOOM.html>

This paradise for Doomsters has links to FTP sites, hacking and editing instructions, add-ons, patches, spoilers, FAQs, forums and Doom II details.

Russian Roulette

<http://www.islandnet.com/~moron/deterrent/deter.html>

Play the deadly game in the knowledge that you won't die. So what's the point?

The Games Domain

<http://wclrs.bham.ac.uk/GamesDomain>

There are squillions of game pages, FTP sites and gamezines on offer here. This is the largest and possibly the speediest server of its type and, yes, Doom is here too.

Zebra Baseball Fantasy League — Home Page

<http://www.hooked.net:80/users/zebra/>

Unfathomable Fantasy Baseball game. Hugely successful in the States, and no doubt a herald for the imminent onslaught of UK based online fantasy football games.

MUSIC

Classical MIDI Archives

<http://www.hk.net/~prs/midi.html>

Based in Hong Kong, this is as its name implies, a collection of music files. Why anyone may find it useful, I don't really know, but it is good to see that classical music has a home on the web as well as pop.

Dreamtime: The Didjeridu W3 Server

<http://www.nd.edu/~sborman/dijeridu/>

Make a didji! Repair it! Listen to other people playing them! Yess, the ultimate Didjeridu web site has arrived. Everything you'll need to know about the exciting world of didji is here...

The Communal Groove Machine

<http://ctdnet.acns.nwu.edu/cmbecker/techno/techno.html>

Strange. This site generates music. It's got something to do with the way a music composing agent interacts with people in CDTMOO, where it lives. Don't worry if you don't understand how it works; it just does, and you can download the results. It really is very, very strange.

Nashville Online

http://www.nool.com/nol/NOL_Home.html

If you're an aspiring Boxcar Willy, then this could be your lucky break! You make a financial transaction, and your demo becomes available for downloading. Beats me why you can't do it for yourself, as it's probably much

cheaper. Still, you can download other people's demos and hear for yourself the glory that is C&W...

The Residents

<http://www.csd.uwo.ca/~tzoq/Resident>

Since the Residents have two PC CD-ROMs out already it's no surprise to see them on the net. The Residents are one of the most secretive bands in the world and their neo-classical music inspires devoted followers all over the globe. The site is run by one such fan and so true is he to the band's music that it would be pointless to try to describe it to you on paper. One to experience.

World of Audio

http://www.magicnet.net/rz/world_of_audio/woa.html

Every music resource in one site! This is one of the best music-related web sites around, and no mistake. There is something for everyone, amateur to professional, tons of technical info... everything you need if your interest is in any way music orientated.

CYBERVILLE

HotJava Home Page

<http://java.sun.com/>

The future of the web is here! Hot Java is going to change the way we use the web, so you'd better find out more about it now! For those of you lucky enough to have access to Sun workstations, there's also demo software. PC software should be available soon.

Microsoft Corporation World-Wide-Web Server

<http://www.microsoft.com/default.htm>

Get the low down on the latest from the corporation that's bigger than entire nations. Who knows, you might even find out when you'll be able to upgrade to Windows '95. Yeah, and the Pope's a woman.

Microsoft Internet Central

<http://www.msn.net/home.html>

More from Mr Gate's corporate machine. Find out more about the Microsoft Network, and how it will change your life as you know it. Actually, I use it, and it's quite good...

The Web Developer's Virtual Library

<http://WWW.Stars.com/>

If you want to start writing your own web site, then this is the place to start. Everything you'll need is here; authoring software, server software and utilities for every conceivable authoring platform. What are you waiting for?

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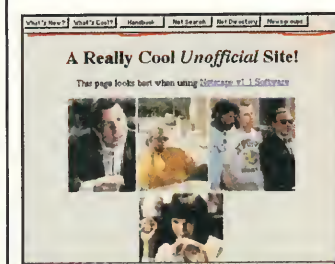


CYBERVILLE

EmapWeb

<http://www.emap.co.uk/>

Going from strength to strength, EmapWeb has LOADS of links to all sorts of web sites. There's also recruitment information, and virtual conferences, plus information on PC Review online.



FILM AND TV

Official Unofficial Pulp Fiction Page

<http://www.kean.edu/~lisaajoy/PulpFiction/>

We like this. In fact we like this rather a lot. This site is a very fine example of what one person can achieve if the motivation is there. It's also quite good for a perusal if you enjoyed Tarrantino's last movie. All your favourite bits are there — plus information on the actors and actresses, movie gossip, facile facts and lots, lots more.



OFF THE WALL

Submit It!

<http://www.cen.uiuc.edu/~banister/submit-it/>

What do you do when you've created your web masterpiece? How do you ensure that as many people as possible get to see it? It's easy when you know how. Just make a submission of your site's url to Submit It!, and ensure that your site gets the attention it deserves.

ZEBRA Fantasy League

Zebra Fantasy Leagues is proud to offer fantasy leagues for various sports. Right now we are offering a Fantasy Baseball League. Look for us in the future as the football season approaches.

Latest News - 7/7/95

The June Monthly Reports for the Baseball League were sent out yesterday morning.

The Football League survey is now on. Simply click on the link to the Football

For baseball fans everywhere this American based fantasy baseball league is a must-visit site. Watch out for the flood of online fantasy football league games which are bound to follow.

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Kid Keys	24.99

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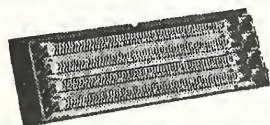
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Video Stars

Rik Henderson has a glance at the latest MPEG-compatible releases, and sees that you really can get anything nowadays...



▲ Sarah Young has risen to untold heights as a porn queen.

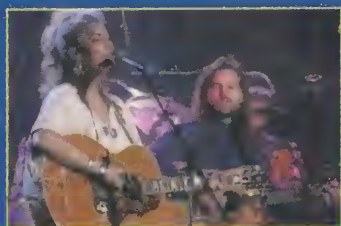
MEMBERS ONLY 1 and 2

(60 mins, 18 rated)

CD Vision, £17.99 each

British porn is a laugh, and certainly not to be taken too seriously, and Linzi Drew is its heroine. So her Members-Only series, which has been out on video for a while already, is good fun and fairly inoffensive — if viewed with an 'I don't really care attitude'. Of course, any porn is debatable, but that doesn't hide the fact that Members Only 1 and 2 are well-produced and not extraordinarily tacky like you'd expect. It's top-shelf men's magazine stuff, and not even the really mucky ones.

8



▲ I'm a little bit country, I'm a little bit rock and roll.

THE WOMEN OF COUNTRY VOLS. 1 and 2

(49 mins, Uncertified)

CD Vision, £14.99 each

I must admit that I'm not a great fan of country music. But The Women of Country Vol. 1 is a well-put together documentary featuring all your Country music heroines chatting about the genre, and a few performances thrown in for good measure. Volume 1 features, amongst others, Emmylou Harris, and Suzy Bogguss.

7

Who To Contact...

CD Vision can be contacted on (0171) 240 7764.

WIN SOME USELESS RUBBISH

Forget global warming, put nuclear proliferation from your mind. The biggest problem we face today is the sea of discarded rubbish that threatens to swamp our technical editor, Andy 'Shandy' Leaning. We need to get rid of some of it and you might just be crazy enough to want it. To win a random selection of Andy's garbage, just answer this simple question: *Which issue this year will mark our 50th edition?* Answers on a postcard marked Bin Win, to the usual PC Review address. Entries must be received before September 10 1995. In the event of a draw we will choose our favourite tie breaker. Complete the following sentence in 10 words or less: I want the rubbish under Andy's desk because...

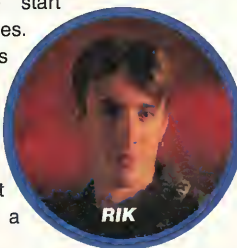
Hatstand

A beer, a burger, a night round the monitor. This month — Doom style games and Guinness.

6.45pm Dark Forces

Just time for a quick one in the pub before we start Dark Forces.

Pat moans about the controls being different from his set up. What a shame.



RIK

Plot: Sci Fi. Based in the Star Wars universe pre Darth Vader's appearance on the Ewok's barbecue. You play a former Imperial agent who's joined the Alliance. What could motivate anyone to give up all that kinky black clothing?

Best weapon: The ridiculously large rocket launcher that you strap onto your wrist (in spite of the fact that it's about the size of a small fridge).

Best death: Getting killed by the invisible thing in the sewers. Either it's some creature with chameleonic abilities or there's a rather large Imperial curry house nearby.

Most stupid death: Getting disoriented in the canyons and falling down a deep, dark hole.

Best excuse for stupid death: It runs a lot faster on a Pentium.

Gore level: One. It's based on Star Wars, what do you expect?

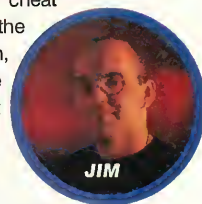
Gloat level: No two-player option but you can slag off people who use the cheats.

We give Dark Forces about 35 minutes before we heave it back in the

CHECK OUT SIMPSONS/DOOM

One of the best things we've found on the net, is a Doom mod which changes all the characters to Simpsons ones. Best bits are Homer shouting 'Doh!' as his death cry, and when he shoots Bart. Brilliant stuff!

drawer. The hunt for the cheat sheet is a failure due to the filth on Rik's desk. 'Oh, arse', says Pat and we adjourn for some take out refreshments.



JIM

7.30pm Doom

Ah, this is a bit more like it. Time to see someone utterly humiliated. Usually it's Jim, but first up is a head-to-head between Rik and Cal and it's embarrassing. The tears, the hysterics. Why can't Rik act like a man?

Plot: Futuristic. Boffin types on Mars military base open a door to Hell and get overrun by Demons claiming to be from the Gas board (that's what door chains are for). Makes you wonder why they bother really.

Best weapon: BFG — Big Frilly Gun? perhaps. Turns your enemies into pretty underdone spare ribs. Wins award for best use of cartilage in a video game.

Real men smoke 12-bore!



That sounds like a rather nasty, sucking chest-wound, Mr Legion of the undead.



Best death: Using the rocket launcher point blank against a wall and blowing yourself to minced beef hell.

Most stupid death: Being punched to death when you're a novice and you're playing someone who plays Doom at Nightmare level 'for a bit of a challenge'.

Best excuse for stupid death: 'I was really low on energy. You saw that didn't you? Three per cent was all I had. Impossible.'

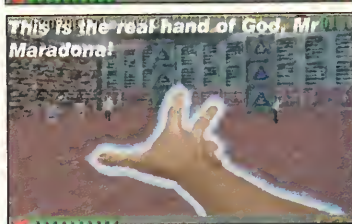
Gore level: Being blown to bits at its very finest.

Gloat level: Classic two player, real life punch up action. Just make sure you play against someone smaller than you.

Andy gets the award for most feeble performance so far — 'I've been too busy working to play games'. Andy gets 'most feeble excuse so far' award.



If they beg for mercy, shoot 'em in the throat.



9.46pm Rise of the Triad

Brilliant two player options on this one. Unless someone picks one of the biggest levels and we spend 15 minutes trying to find anyone to shoot. Andy does unexpectedly (and embarrassingly) well and the feeble award excuse has to be divided amongst the rest of the office.

Plot: Laughable. You're a member of H.U.N.T (High risk United Nations Taskforce) out to smash a cult conspiracy of fireworks experts and movie producers destroying L.A.

Best weapon: Dog mode. Turn into an invincible dog and eat the bad guys. Comedy action all the way.

Best death: Getting a big spear 'up there' — brings tears to the eyes I can tell you.

Most stupid death: Bouncing off the edge of the cliff and falling to a rather messy death.

Best excuse for stupid death: Absolutely none whatsoever.

Gore level: Five intestines out of five. Watch the eyeballs fly past you. This is the one to beat.

Gloat level: Incredible. Send audible taunts to your opponent. 'Guess what I have,' and 'Behind you' are two of the favourites.

Chuckles. Rik comes up with classic quote of the night, 'this looks like an explosion in a spam factory'. After so much mayhem it can only be burger in a bun time. So off to the local late-night burger parlour we go.



DRUNKEN VERDICT

As the team swayed out of the office at the end of yet another day's hard work (you sure about that? — Ed) the verdict was that what makes a damn good game is shooting things and the opportunity to humiliate your friends. As soon as Andy caught his tube he was awarded the title of worst games player in the whole country and Pat stumbled over to a wheelie bin to download the burger.

WHO'S WHO?

Steve James

is our illustrious editor. A man of courage and vision. A man who pays my wages. He also has a fondness for letters, so damn well send some.



Rik Henderson

is our associate editor and Mr Multimedia. If you happen to know what an associate editor does then can you please write and tell him, so he can get on with it.

Cal Jones

is our games editor and one of the most dangerous women on the reviews team (mainly because she's the only one). Cal can really hold her ale, but can't stand up if she actually drinks it.

Andy Leaning

fixes all our PC stuff, eventually, tomorrow, I'm waiting for the drivers to be delivered, it'll be done by lunch time. He also runs the Serious section.

Pat Fox

is a PC Review staff writer. He used to live in Canada but unfortunately he came back. Pat loves playing computer games, so we keep him doing technical stuff

Jim Gillies

is also a staff writer. His main hobbies are playing computer games and rubbing Pat's face in it. Jim also donates money to his favourite charity. The City Pride.

Ian Howie

co-ordinates our coverdisk. We have him on a time share with PC Games they get him for two weeks in July and a week in October.

PC REVIEW 47

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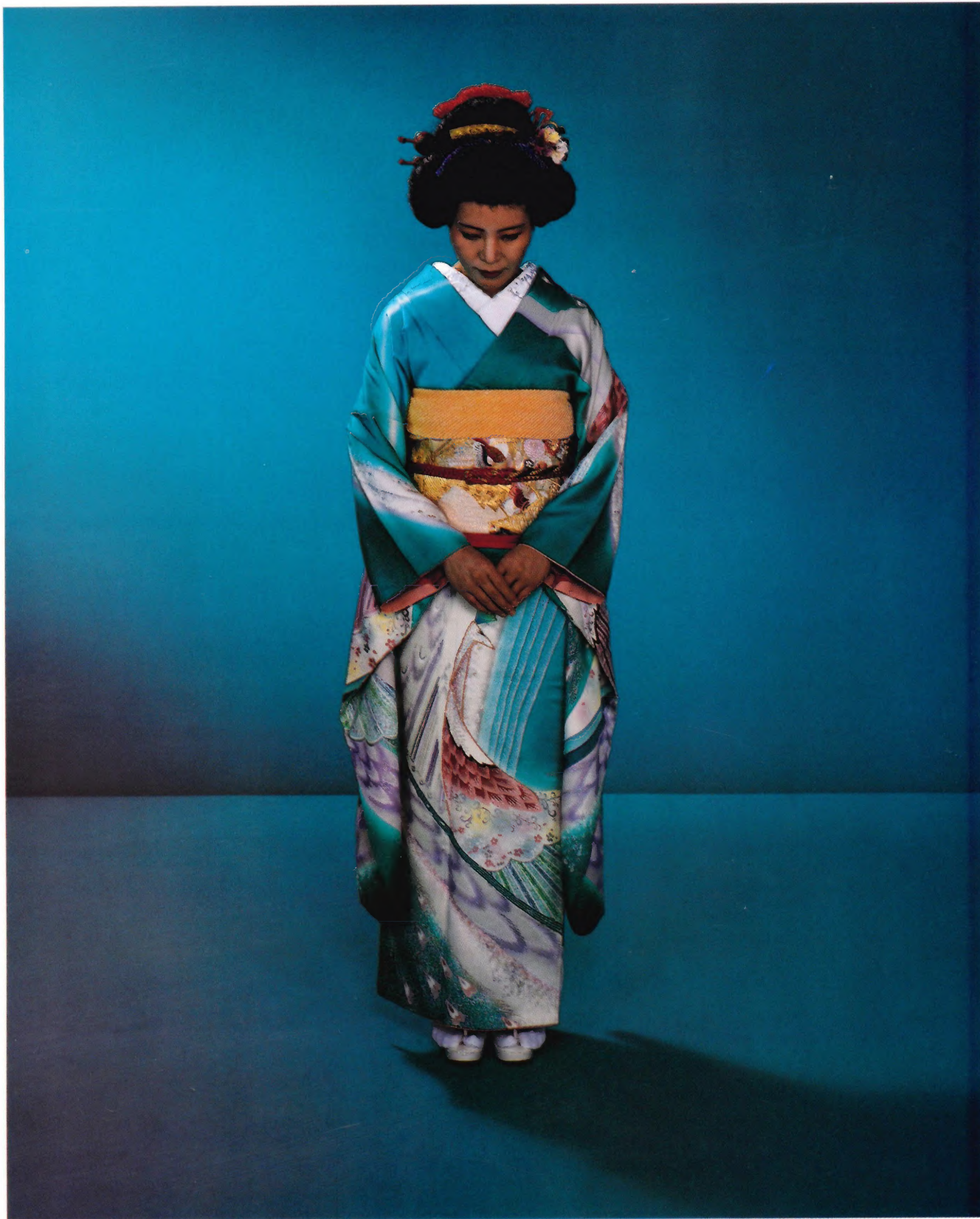
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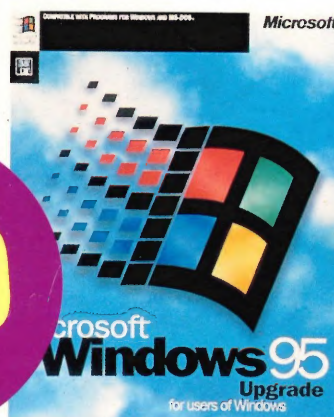


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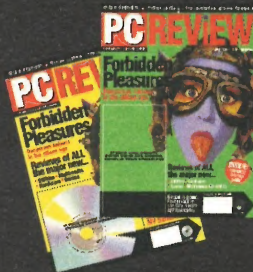
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